



Carnegie-Mellon University



PRESENTED BY

George H. Burnett









Secret Memoirs  
OF THE  
Courts of Europe

FROM THE  
16TH TO THE 19TH CENTURY

\* \*

VOLUME I

# Imperial Edition

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SECRET MEMOIRS

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**The Court of Empress Josephine**

VOLUME I





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*EMPRESS JOSEPHINE*

*After the painting by Baron François Gérard*

SECRET MEMOIRS  
OF THE  
COURTS OF EUROPE

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*The Court of Empress Josephine*

WITH ANECDOTES OF THE  
COURTS OF NAVARRE AND MALMAISON

BY  
MADAME DUCREST

IN TWO VOLUMES ■  
VOL. I

ILLUSTRATED

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## P R E F A C E

IN venturing to write a work, the idea of which would never have entered my mind had I not yielded to the repeated entreaties of my friends, I am not actuated by any desire of acquiring celebrity. I am fully sensible of my deficiency in everything that constitutes an author; and my innate indolence of disposition would moreover prevent me from encountering the many vexations reserved for every female who ventures upon the dangerous career of literary pursuits. Having had much intercourse with the higher classes of society, with the most celebrated characters of our time, the most distinguished artists and the most esteemed men of letters, I have treasured up a variety of recollections which may not be found altogether uninteresting.

Having enjoyed the intimate society of the Empress Josephine after her divorce, I am more particularly induced to take up my pen with the view of furnishing *correct* details respecting her domestic life; she will be the principal theme of my Memoirs; I shall only relate what I saw; and

this task will be the more agreeable to my feelings, as it cannot fail to create fresh regret for the loss of that extraordinary woman. Many writers have flattered her when she was seated upon the throne ; I shall merely relate what I know of her since she descended from it ; and I may confidently hope that no one will call my narrative in question.

Those persons who were not acquainted with the Empress Josephine will find my account of her in some degree exaggerated ; those, on the contrary, who have been attached to her household, will very justly observe that I have kept within the truth. To form a proper estimate of her worth would require a previous knowledge of the many traits of goodness which have so much endeared her memory. She took so much pains to conceal her acts of benevolence that the greater part are still buried in oblivion. Many of those upon whom she conferred a service have forgotten what *the usurper's wife* had done for them ! her conduct towards me on all occasions was so amiable and considerate that it claims my unbounded gratitude. In my anxiety to fulfil so sacred an obligation, and in the hope of adding some colours to her portrait, I yield to the wishes of my friends.

In spite, however, of the universal mania, I shall avoid saying much upon matters purely personal ; my misfortunes, however severe they may be, would only interest a very limited number of persons ; I prefer passing over that bitter period of my life where I found no consolation except such as I derived from

the endearments of friendship, and shall only remember the past to bless those who have alleviated my sufferings. Any inaccuracy in my narrative will be altogether involuntary on my part; and I solicit beforehand the forgiveness of those whom I may have occasion to name. I may sometimes err in point of dates; the constant succession of misfortunes and of occurrences that have disturbed the peace of my existence for the last fifteen years will plead my excuse for having occasionally confounded the periods of events. Of this I am quite satisfied that I have never distorted an honourable trait in anyone's character; in short, I take up my pen with the utmost diffidence, and must venture to hope I may meet with that indulgence of which I stand so much in need.



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# MEMOIRS

OF THE

## EMPRESS JOSEPHINE

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### CHAPTER I

FRENCH EMIGRANTS IN LONDON—THEIR MEANS OF SUBSISTENCE—OUR SOCIETY—CRAMER—VIOTTI—JARNOWICK—SUBSCRIPTIONS—THE PRINCE OF WALES—THE DUKE DE BERRI—THE DUKE D'ORLEANS—VISCOUNT DE MARIN—DUSSECK—GEORGE III. AND LOUIS XVIII.

THE most distant period to which my recollection extends is the year 1794. I was then quite a child; but events of little importance and circumstances of trivial interest fix themselves indelibly in the youthful mind, which is keenly susceptible to impressions of every kind. Being born and bred in emigration, I was brought into close contact with many individuals now at the head of the French Government. Having been accustomed from infancy to revere the Princes for whom we had renounced our country, I could never after hear their names pronounced without experiencing a very natural emotion: they revived in my memory the long and cruel sufferings of my parents. For these illustrious exiles I always

cherished the respect due to them, and to the sentiments I imbibed at this early age I must doubtless attribute the repugnance I subsequently felt at the thought of accepting any place dependent on the family who superseded the Bourbons. I positively refused the situation of Dame du Palais to the Queen of Naples (the wife of Joseph Bonaparte). A relation of mine, who urgently solicited the situation for me, obtained the promise that I should have it as soon as I attained my sixteenth year. I wept so bitterly when she informed me of the success of her application, that she plainly saw my scruples would not be easily overcome. My resolution continued unchanged, and the place which had been the object of numerous solicitations was given to another. I should not thus notice an affair, which is entirely of a personal nature, were it not to shew that in speaking favourably of the Empress Josephine I cannot justly be accused of partiality.

Before I enter upon the circumstances which introduced me to the Empress, I must go back to the years of my early childhood, the only interval of my existence that has been exempt from misery, because I was not then of an age to feel it. At a more advanced period of life I should have lamented the distressed situation of my parents, who were suddenly deprived of a handsome fortune of which they made an honourable use ; I should have pined to see my mother reduced to the necessity of exerting her musical talents for the support of my father and myself ; the most distinguished musical professors in England assembled at my mother's house for the purpose of giving concerts. On these occasions I was noticed and caressed, and therefore was happy.

Among the persons of note who visited my parents

were Dusseck and Cramer. Though rivals, they were intimate friends. They listened to one another's performances with mutual pleasure, and each readily rendered justice to the other as the following anecdote will shew. Dusseck having on one occasion arrived later than usual, Cramer asked him how it happened.

"I have been busy composing a new *rondo*," he replied; "I was very well pleased with it, and yet, though perfectly satisfied with the result of my labour, I have thrown the manuscript into the fire."

"But why?"

"I will tell you . . . . I had introduced a confounded passage which I practised for several hours without being able to execute it. I suspected you would play it off hand, and I was determined not to submit to such a mortification."

This was said in the hearing of more than thirty persons. Such instances of liberality are not often met with in individuals following the same profession, and the circumstance from its singularity appears to me worth recording.

Viotti and Jarnowick, the two celebrated violinists, attended the concerts above alluded to, as did also Vicomte de Marin, who was fortunate enough to possess a resource which relieved him from the necessity of depending on English charity. Many emigrants being destitute of all means of support were obliged to hold out their hands to their country's enemies. How much more honourable was the feeling of those who preferred maintaining themselves by their own exertions! To accept an asylum was, I thought all that Frenchmen ought to have done; and to grant

that asylum was but an act of justice on the part of England, whose banished sovereign had at a former period been hospitably received in France. Thus George III., in the name of royalty and the nation, acquitted the debt of James II. Like Louis XVIII., James found safety and protection in his adversity, but he did not, like the former, exhibit to the admiration of the world an example of simplicity and self-denial. Our royal family could dispense with luxury when their countrymen wanted bread. They denied themselves all superfluities in order to maintain the faithful servants who accompanied them in their exile; thus proving in England, as they have since done in France, that every virtue may be united on a throne.

At this period many individuals of exalted rank were distinguished for their noble conduct in adversity. In them, misfortune served only to develop qualities which in the vortex of prosperity might possibly have lain dormant. With few exceptions, they are now all reinstated in their honours and dignities. Perhaps they sometimes call to mind our social meetings, where ranks were forgotten and confounded, and where confidence and friendship were not mere empty words. They must, I think, occasionally regret their happy poverty, and the cordial feeling which lives only in their recollection.

The English, perhaps from motives of policy, received the emigrants kindly, and supplied them with everything that could tend to assuage their misery. The Prince of Wales in particular manifested the liveliest interest in their behalf, and his name appeared at the head of all the subscriptions opened for their relief.

He was on terms of intimate friendship with the Dukes de Berri and d'Orleans. Previous to the Revolution, the Prince felt an ardent wish to spend some time in France, but he could not gratify his inclination, the heir to the throne of England being prohibited from quitting the country without the consent of Parliament. The Prince of Wales did not apply for this consent, because he knew very well it would not be granted.

Jarnowick, whom I have mentioned above, was not more remarkable for his talent as a performer on the violin than for an original vein of humour, of which the following anecdote is characteristic. He gave a concert which was very fully attended. On the commencement of a *concerto* which he had to perform, the company continued conversing together, while their whispering was mingled with clattering of tea cups and saucers.<sup>1</sup> Jarnowick turned to the orchestra and desired the performers to stop.

"These people," said he, "know nothing about music. I will give them something better suited to their taste. Anything is good enough for these drinkers of warm water."

So saying, he immediately commenced the air, "J'ai du bon tabac," and strange as it may appear, he was overwhelmed with applause; his second performance was listened to with attention, and the circulation of the tea cups was suspended until its conclusion.

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x It was customary to serve the company with tea throughout the whole evening, during the performances as well as in the intervening pauses. The waiters were directed to distribute refreshments, and they did their duty conscientiously.

## CHAPTER II

JOURNEY TO HAMBURG — LADY FITZGERALD — MADAME DE GENLIS AND MADAME RÉCAMIER—LORD EDWARD FITZGERALD — THE DUKE OF RICHMOND — PRINCE FERDINAND LOUIS OF PRUSSIA—FRENCH SOCIETY—RIVAROL—MADAME CHEVALIER, THE FRENCH ACTRESS—PAUL I., EMPEROR OF RUSSIA—RESIDENCE AT ALTONA —PRINCESS DE VAUDEMONT—GARAT AND RODE

WE quitted London for Hamburg, where I saw Lady Edward Fitzgerald, who was then as celebrated for her beauty as Madame Récamier subsequently was in Paris. Madame de Genlis has in her Memoirs dwelt so fully on the merits of her interesting pupil, that little remains to be said of her by anyone else; yet I cannot pass over in silence her admirable conduct at the time her unfortunate lord was arrested. To gain access to his prison she remained thirty-six hours concealed in a peat-house. She quitted her hiding-place exhausted by cold and fatigue; but she had the happiness of conveying consolation to her husband, who was condemned for high treason.<sup>1</sup> She was the object of universal admiration, and her portrait was sold in all the print

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<sup>1</sup> The sentence of attainder has since been reversed, and his property restored to his family.

shops. Her extraordinary courage, her exquisite beauty, and the many amiable qualities that adorned her, made a deep impression on the heart of the Duke of Richmond, and he offered to marry her as soon as she should lay aside her widow's weeds. Lady Fitzgerald, however, refused him; but afterwards gave her hand to Mr. Pitcairn, the Consul of the United States at Hamburg.

During our stay in that city, we were on terms of intimacy with Prince Ferdinand Louis of Prussia.<sup>1</sup> He had been sent from Berlin by the King, who was offended at his disorderly course of life. To banish him from a capital where he was the subject of general observation, was certainly not the best way to mend him. At Hamburg, where he was alone without control, and surrounded by young companions still more dissipated than himself, he often lost sight of the dignity due to his rank. However, he compensated for all his follies by extreme courage, noble sentiments, wit, information of no common kind, and singular talent for the piano. His tutor was the Abbé Raynal, and he received his musical instruction from Mozart. The Prince was a pleasing composer, and his execution might be considered wonderful at that period. His features were regular and handsome. In the society of women his manners were gallant and agreeable, but he was apt to drink freely and behave disorderly in the company of men. He got involved in quarrels with the city guard; rescued children from the flames in the frequent fires

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<sup>1</sup> He was killed at Saalfeld. He refused to surrender to a quartermaster of Hussars, who stabbed him.

which broke out in Hamburg; associated with the players; and gave his money freely to poor families who were recommended to his charity; in short, he was at once an object of fear, love, and pity. He could bear to hear the truth, and when told of his faults he would frankly acknowledge them and promise to avoid them in future. But after the lapse of a few days all his follies and extravagances were repeated. This mixture of good and bad, sensibility, frivolity, gaiety and gravity, rendered the young Prince more like a Frenchman than a German. He was, indeed, fond of the French, and associated very much with them. M. de — once reproached him for being too much in the company of individuals noted for their Jacobinical opinions (those who wore the tri-coloured cockade).

"I like their sentiments," said Ferdinand, "for though a prince, I am on the *popular* side. Take care, monseigneur, not to get on the side of the *populace*," rejoined the other. This observation, which conveyed an allusion to a recent unfortunate event, ought to have been a lesson to the individual to whom it was addressed.

M. de Rivarol, so celebrated for his wit, was also in Hamburg at the period here alluded to. He was a very late riser; and every morning before he was up he received a crowd of idle young men, whose vanity was gratified if they could boast of being acquainted with a man of such superior talent. M. de Rivarol held a *levée* in the strict sense of the term. Adulation was carried to the extreme, and all esteemed themselves happy in receiving a kind word from one who was fond of amusing himself at other people's absurdities; he loved to indulge in satirical allusions, which were not always understood

by those against whom they were directed, and by whom they were sometimes repeated with an air of complacency at evening parties. M. de Rivarol used to say that people visited him for the purpose of polishing their wit. That he should so freely have indulged this dangerous habit of satire was a subject of regret. He possessed talents which were calculated to raise him to the highest distinction; but indolence and other bad qualities checked him in the career which he might have honourably pursued. For a few years he was the object of praise and adulation, and now his name is scarcely ever mentioned.

Madame Chevalier, an actress at the Théâtre Français, was at this time the idol of the good people of Hamburg. Her beauty, her agreeable voice, joined to her modest and graceful manner, secured her the most brilliant success. She received advantageous proposals from St. Petersburg, which she accepted. I attended her farewell performance, and though I was then only six years of age, the comic solemnity of the affair made a deep impression on my mind. The theatre was crowded. At the termination of the last piece, Madame Chevalier advanced to the front of the stage and attempted to sing some verses which had been composed for the occasion; however, *excessive emotion* disabled her from executing her task, and her husband, who rushed forward to support her, informed the audience that she had been taken suddenly ill. Great confusion prevailed in the theatre: the ladies declared that the scene had been got up for the occasion; that nervous fits were all out of date, &c., &c. As to the gentlemen, they were disconsolate at the thought of losing the *lovely creature*. The old senators, in their full

black velvet suits, enormous ruffles, and curled wigs, dried their tears with as sentimental an air as the French fops. They even carried their testimonials of affection so far as to throw purses full of gold at the feet of the interesting actress. The emigrants who had not quite so much money to spare were content to present her with a crown. Similar scenes often occur now-a-days; but in Madame Chevalier's time people were not quite so liberal as they now are, and it was thought ridiculous to bestow on a well-paid actress testimonials of enthusiasm such as would be lavished on the hero who might have delivered his country. Next morning the public seemed to wonder how they could have been drawn into such an absurdity.

Madame Chevalier subsequently became the mistress of Paul I., when she sold places under the Russian Government; and in spite of all her shew of fine feeling, bargained for a few roubles to get people exiled to Siberia. Being hated in Russia for the cruelties of which she was the instrument, she was obliged to take to flight on the death of the Emperor. She returned to Poland, where her pretty face turned the head of a rich palatine, who got her divorced from her husband, and married her. What afterwards became of her I know not, but certainly her existence must have been embittered by the recollection of the many acts of oppression and cruelty of which she was the cause. Her remorse has no doubt amply avenged her victims.

The pleasant little town of Altona, which is separated from Hamburg only by a long alley of trees, also afforded an asylum to many French refugees. The

Princess de Vaudemont<sup>1</sup> had a very agreeable residence at Altona, and she erected a neat little theatre in which comedies and operas were performed. It was frequented by all the distinguished foreigners in the town. The Princess was not handsome, but a fine figure, a luxuriant head of hair, dignified manners, a large fortune, and a noble name, were sufficient to attract admirers, while her excellent heart secured her a numerous circle of friends. She was often hasty and even harsh<sup>2</sup>; but she speedily recovered her good humour, and never refused to grant any service she had power to render. Her hospitable reception of her exiled countrymen helped them to forget their absence from their native home.<sup>3</sup> Since her return to Paris she has continued to lead the same sort of life, protecting and encouraging the arts, and administering aid and consolation to the distressed. In short, she is worthy of the name of Montmorency.

Two of the most esteemed among the French emigrants were Garat and Rode. Their admirable musical talent, pleasing manners, and original turn of mind were alike appreciated by the French and the Germans. Their music and their conversation were listened to with equal delight, and their presence was always sufficient to animate a party. They had an odd way of relating humorous incidents which they always pre-

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1 Of the family of Montmorency-Nivelle.

2 M. de Rivarol used to compare her to nature: sometimes rugged, often beautiful, and always beneficent.

3 Among the number were Monseigneur de Clermont-Tonnerre, Bishop of Chalons, now Archbishop of Toulouse and a cardinal; and M. Joseph de Caraman, Prince Chimay.

tended had occurred to themselves. They were on a footing of the closest intimacy, and they mutually vouched for the truth of each other's stories with such an air of gravity that people were at length persuaded to believe them. The following is an anecdote of which Garat declared himself to have been the hero, and which he asserted was true.

Having been arrested at the commencement of the Revolution, he used to amuse himself in his captivity by singing almost all day long. He used to say that these vocal exercises had greatly increased the natural flexibility of his voice; the rest of the prisoners used to assemble in the corridor or under his windows to listen to him. One day one of them entered his apartment, and after saluting him with every mark of respect, said,—

“I understand, sir, you are the incomparable Garat.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Your talent is prodigious.”

“Sir!——”

“Do not interrupt me. Your talent, I say, sir, is prodigious; and no one can dispute your right to the title of god of music. I am your greatest admirer.”

“Sir, you honour me.”

“I am competent to form an estimate of your abilities, for I devote a great deal of my time to the enchanting art in which you excel.”

“Are you a musician, sir?” said Garat, not seeing the drift of all these compliments.

“Yes, sir, we are colleagues; therefore you will admit that it is very natural I should address myself to

you to solicit an important service."

"What can I do for you?"

"The Vandals, who are now in possession of power, oppose everything that tends to promote the progress of art. To devote one's self to the study of it is in their eyes a heinous offence; and therefore, in a case of great difficulty, I have presumed to address myself to you."

"I am at your service."

"An unfortunate accident has disabled me from cultivating my talent; it depends upon you to restore me to my favourite pursuits."

"How?"

"A man like you cannot be ignorant of anything relating to music; therefore, I have come to ask you to put my instrument in order, and I will lend it you as soon as it is fit to be played upon."

With these words the stranger drew from under his mantle, and presented to Garat, a little instrument called a serinette, used for teaching canary birds to sing.

Garat burst into an immoderate fit of laughter, in which he was joined by several persons who rushed in to enquire the cause of his merriment.

The owner of the serinette, amazed at the general hilarity, retired deeply mortified, and from that time became the declared enemy of Garat, whom he distinguished by the title of the "charlatan."

## CHAPTER III

OUR DEPARTURE FOR COPENHAGEN — RECEPTION OF MY FAMILY BY THE PRINCE ROYAL — THE PRINCESS OF AUGUSTENBURG — MADAME BROWN — M. CONINCK — M. MONOD — PORTRAIT OF KING CHRISTIAN — RECEPTION OF M. GROUVELLE, AMBASSADOR FROM THE FRENCH REPUBLIC — THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS ROYAL — M. LEBRUN

THE number of emigrants of various opinions, who thronged to Hamburg and Altona, made a residence in those towns very disagreeable to people who wished to live free of discussion. My parents resolved to withdraw themselves from those coteries, in which a phrase or a word frequently became the ground of anger and dispute. They set out for Copenhagen, where they had reason to hope for a wider field for the exercise of their talents, and where they were sure of enjoying greater tranquillity. They were most graciously received by the Prince Royal (the present King), his amiable sister the Princess of Augustenburg, and numerous individuals of high rank, who generously protected misfortune without regard to the causes which produced it. The number of French in Copenhagen was limited, and they lived very agreeably in a city where the arts not being generally culti-

vated, all whose talents were calculated to enliven society were sure of being well received.

My parents became intimately acquainted with Madame Brown, whose talents and acquirements are extolled by Madame de Staël<sup>1</sup> and also with M. de Coninck, whose vast fortune enabled him freely to indulge his benevolent disposition. The following traits bear ample evidence of the excellence of his heart.

M. de Coninck, about twenty years before we knew him, arrived at Copenhagen with one louis in his pocket and some letters of recommendation to one or two good commercial houses. A merchant to whom he was thus introduced, being much pleased with him, engaged him as clerk, and afterwards gave him a share in the business. His intelligence, rigid probity, and great knowledge of commercial affairs speedily enabled him to amass a brilliant fortune, and he was appointed banker to the Court.

Whenever he had reason to be well satisfied with any young man in his employment, he threw advantages in his way and enabled him to start in business for himself.

He used often to say to his clerks: "I began with less than you. Be honest and industrious, and you

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<sup>1</sup> These two ladies lived on a footing of close friendship at Rome and Geneva. Madame Brown had a daughter distinguished for literary genius. At the age of thirteen she wrote verses in several languages, which she spoke with as much fluency as her mother-tongue. She was tall and handsome, and excelled in the art of expressing by animated pantomime every delicate shade of powerful passion. Her attitudes and gestures were full of grace and dignity. Canova several times requested her to stand as his model. She is now Madame de Bombelles.

cannot fail to prosper. You shall have all the assistance I can render you."

Such a promise was as good as a written engagement, for M. de Coninck never broke his word. His family consisted of eight children and his excellent wife, who fully shared all his benevolence of feeling. In the choice of husbands for their daughters they were never influenced by the consideration of rank or wealth; good conduct and irreproachable reputation were the only recommendations they desired. One of the young ladies married the tutor who superintended the education of her brothers. M. and Madame de Coninck, having had abundant opportunity of judging of the merits of the gentleman, readily consented to the union; and they did well, for the marriage has proved a singularly happy one. The individual thus preferred to many Danish noblemen was M. Monod, a clergyman in Paris, no less distinguished for his virtues than for high talent in his profession; he is an example for the imitation of all young preachers of the Gospel, the precepts of which are best inculcated by those who do not neglect to practise them.

M. de Coninck generously provided for a lady who was engaged as governess to his daughters. He purchased a house, furnished it, and enabled her to open a boarding school. He placed his daughters and nieces under her care, and her connection soon became so extensive that she was obliged to limit the number of her pupils.

M. de Coninck had in his country-house an unfortunate emigrant, a man of estimable character, whom he established in a warehouse similar to the

Petit-Dunkerque. The man ultimately realized a fortune which enabled him to end his days comfortably in France.

The winter of 1797 being unusually severe, Madame de Coninck determined to distribute all the wood in her magnificent hot-houses among the poor inhabitants of the village on their estate.

"Whenever I regret the want of a peach," said she, "I console myself with the reflection that the poor have fuel. Thus I shall not be obliged to curtail my usual distributions, or to make fresh demands upon my husband who saves money only to *lay it well out*."

His *interests* were the blessings of the poor and unfortunate.

On the bombardment of Copenhagen by the English, a subscription was opened for the widows and orphans of the sailors who were victims of the fatal event. M. de Coninck set down his name for 15,000 rix-thalers. We were not in Copenhagen at the time, but the circumstance was related to us by a friend who was witness to it.

M. de Coninck used to relate several curious anecdotes of King Christian, who was then on the throne. He was looked upon as mad, though he never gave any proof of madness either in the administration of justice or on any other important occasion. He was, I dare say, naturally an eccentric character, and his temper being ruffled by continual irritation he had acquired a wildness of manner which gave rise to the idea of his being insane.

He was constantly teased by being forced to do what was disagreeable to him. He disliked sitting long at table, and yet, whenever he drew back his chair

and prepared to rise, he was forcibly detained by two Norwegian body-guards who stood behind him. He was fond of chatting with those about him, and yet his attendants were ordered not to answer him when he spoke. Foreigners, indignant at the tyranny to which he was subjected, sometimes ventured to enter into conversation with him. His ministers addressed him only to reproach him or to order him to do what they wanted. Any individual of the Court to whom he happened to put a question immediately cast down his eyes and withdrew. He was never suffered to be alone, even when he desired it. These continued vexations were of course calculated to irritate a man whose mind had been previously harassed by unfortunate events. He had but very little money at his disposal, but that little he used to distribute among the poor whom he met in his daily walks. I saw him several times, and his countenance and figure are rivetted in my memory, partly from the fear with which I was inspired by his reported madness, and partly from my girlish admiration of his red coat trimmed with gold lace. He was decidedly ugly, but his melancholy air could not fail to excite interest.

When he visited the theatre, which he did very frequently, he had before him the score of the opera that was performed, and he followed all the pieces as they were sung. On these occasions he was always attended by a chamberlain, to whom he continually spoke without receiving an answer; a nod of the head was the utmost he ever obtained. He was remarkable for his gallant manners to females. He cultivated choice flowers, which he made up in bouquets and presented

them to the ladies, who thanked him only by a curtesy. When he met any ladies in the park, where he frequently walked, he took off his hat and remained uncovered until they were out of sight.

His ministers wanted him to sign an act which he considered unjust. He refused; they insisted, and at at length he took the pen and signed *Christian and Company*, being determined, so he said, not to take upon himself the responsibility of such a law. They made him renew the signature several times, but he always repeated it in the same manner. He thus prevented the publication of an ordinance prejudicial to the interests of his subjects, to whom he was much attached.<sup>1</sup> The foreign ambassadors were always introduced to him, and etiquette required that he should say to each,—

“How is the King, your master?”

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1 In conformity with an ancient law, the King of Denmark always has at the right door of his carriage, a man on horseback, armed with a loaded musket. His majesty, having the right of life and death over his subjects, may order this guard to fire on any person for the most trivial offence. There is only one instance recorded of the exercise of this arbitrary privilege, and the victim then was a wretch who had been guilty of the most atrocious calumnies, and had besides been engaged in several swindling transactions, but for want of sufficient proof he could not be condemned. King Christian, in spite of his madness, never thought of exercising this barbarous prerogative. The existence of this odious law in Denmark is the more astonishing, because in that country the punishment of death is not inflicted on criminals; the severest sentence to which they are condemned being hard labour for life. When a person has been unjustly condemned, he is, on his innocence being proved, paraded through the city in one of the King's state carriages. He is preceded by a herald proclaiming the annulment of his sentence, which is likewise published in all the journals. A pension is settled on the unfortunate man by the Government

M. Grouvelle, who was celebrated for his share in a trial which France must ever deplore, arrived at Copenhagen as Minister of the French Republic. He presented himself to the King in full costume, having a velvet cloak, a hat and feathers, and a tri-coloured scarf. The King, having addressed the usual question to the other members of the diplomatic body, turned suddenly to M. Grouvelle, and said,—

*“How is the King your master? . . . I beg your pardon, I mean the Republic your mistress?”*

He then turned his back to the minister without waiting for an answer.

The Prince and Princess Royal often walked out unattended, carrying their own umbrellas, and in this manner visited the shops in Copenhagen. They were exceedingly simple in their manners, and were beloved by the people. It might, however, have been wished that they had shewn more regard for the King, whom they treated very unkindly. This unfortunate sovereign died a victim to protracted misery of every kind. He was regretted by the Danes, who knew that he wished to see them happy.

The city of Copenhagen has been frequently ravaged by fires, and is now almost entirely re-built. All the new erections are beautiful. The royal palace had been completely destroyed by fire, shortly before our arrival; and the King then occupied a very mean residence. The port is beautiful, and the neighbouring promenades delightful.

In the streets of Copenhagen I saw a great number of Chinese; they lived in a particular quarter of the city, where they observed all their national customs. They

sometimes performed music which appeared very singular to our European ears, accustomed as we are to regular and pleasing melodies. Their singing is a sort of monotonous psalmody, performed in a sort of *sotto voce* style and accompanied on a sort of guitar having only one string and a long finger-board. On hearing a lady sing who possessed considerable power of execution, one of them asked what she had in her throat which enabled her to produce such beautiful and varied sounds.

At Copenhagen I heard the famous Lebrun, whose talent as a horn player was then beyond all competition.<sup>1</sup> He had a letter of introduction to my father, who was a passionate lover of music. Overjoyed at receiving a visit from the distinguished artist, he called me, and presenting me to Lebrun, he said,—

“Here, child, is the first horn player in Europe.”

“Oh, papa,” I exclaimed, “then it must be M. Lebrun !”

He was pleased with this remark, which proved how greatly I had heard his talent extolled.<sup>2</sup>

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1 At a subsequent period he wished to give a concert in Paris, but was not allowed to do so. Indignant at the injustice of his countrymen, and having lost all the fortune he had acquired by a laborious life, he was reduced to despair, and committed suicide by suffocating himself.

2 This reminds me of an observation made by my daughter on Girodet's picture of Galathea. When repeated to the celebrated artist, he said it was one of the best compliments he had ever received. I took my daughter who was five years of age, to the Salon, and on her attention being directed to the picture, she said, “Mamma, the woman is beautiful, very beautiful, but she looks something like plaster.” This proves how perfectly the painter had succeeded in representing the half-animate figure.

## CHAPTER IV

MY RETURN TO FRANCE—MADAME DE MONTESSON—  
MADAME BONAPARTE—FOUCHÉ, THE MINISTER OF  
POLICE—M. MARET—FÊTE ON THE 1ST VENDÉMIAIRE  
—DEATH OF M. CESAR DUCREST—M. DE VALENCE  
—GENERAL DUMOURIEZ—BONAPARTE CROWNED BY  
MADAME DE MONTESSON—SUPERSTITION OF BONAPARTE  
—MADAME DE MONTESSON'S SALOON—MM. TALLEYRAND,  
MARET, PERIGNON, VILLIERS DU TERRAGE, ARNAULT,  
DESFAUCHERETS, GARAT, AIGNAN, COUPIGNY, DESPRÉS,  
AND ISABEY

IN the year 1800 I returned to France with my parents. Like all our companions in misfortune, we hoped, when our names should be erased from the fata list, to recover some portion of the property we had lost. My father exerted all his efforts to obtain this object. Through the kind interest of Madame de Montesson he was reinstated in his rights as a *citizen*. Madame Bonaparte, who was on terms of intimacy with our protectress, zealously promoted the business which her friend had at heart. She strongly recommended my father to Fouché, the Minister of Police. The latter was exceedingly gracious, and requested my father to produce his certificates of residence.

“All the emigrants are doing so,” said he; “and

are proving every day that they never quitted France."

"But I cannot do so, citizen minister; I have no papers that can be presented to you, except a passport in a false name, which I purchased at Hamburg for twelve francs. I have been eleven years absent from France."

"What! you have no means of proving that your name has been unjustly inscribed on the list?"

"No."

"Oh! well, in that case you shall be erased immediately, for I shall conclude that you never quitted your country; those who emigrated have brought forward so much evidence to prove that they did not, that I presume you are imposing on me in the contrary way, and that you have really been all the time in Paris. In two days you shall receive your erasure."

It was accordingly announced by M. Maret (afterwards Duke de Bassano), who immediately conveyed the intelligence to my father at his abode, on the fourth story of a wretched, furnished hotel in the Rue des Frondeurs. M. Maret was much affected in making a communication, which he was aware would effect a great change in the circumstances of an individual who had suffered long and severely. My father never mentioned without feelings of gratitude Maret's kindness to him on that occasion.

All our property was sold, and, but for the generosity of an aunt, we should have been utterly destitute. At this time Madame Bonaparte acquired strong claims on our attachment. A new proof of the excellence of her heart soon occurred. It was on the following occasion:

A national fête was given to celebrate the anniversary of the Republic. There was a grand display of

fireworks on the Seine; and the boatmen had orders to permit none but generals to enter their boats. Some of the fireworks, to which a wrong direction had been given, fell into a boat in which were M. Valence, and his cousin, M. Cesar Ducrest, a young man generally esteemed for his excellent character and amiable manners. By this unfortunate accident M. Ducrest was killed, and M. de Valence had his arm broken.

M. de Valence, supposing that his young relative had merely fainted from the shock, had him immediately conveyed to the hut of the Commissary of Police, where every effort was made to restore him, but in vain. All that remained to be done was to contrive some mode of communicating the sad event to the family of the unfortunate young man, who were at that moment preparing for his approaching marriage.

Two messengers who were dispatched on this melancholy errand arrived at M. Ducrest's house about midnight. They merely stated that the young man had been wounded, and that he was under the care of a medical man, and wished to see his father. The old gentleman set out immediately, and as he approached the Champs-Élysées the two messengers began to hint at the serious nature of the accident; at length, when they reached the fatal spot where the remains of his beloved son were deposited, they entreated him to summon all his resolution. He had hitherto been far from suspecting the fatal truth; but he looked at his two guides, and the emotion depicted in their countenances left no doubt of his misfortune. The wretched father, in his despair forgetting his two daughters and every remaining family tie, was on the point of rushing into

the Seine, but the rash act was prevented by the two individuals who had so cautiously acquainted M. Ducrest with his irreparable misfortune.<sup>1</sup>

The Commissary of the Police required the old man to go through the formality of owning the remains of his son; but all his natural strength of mind had forsaken him, and he could not look at the body. He, however, identified a watch and a pin which he had himself presented to his son only a few days before. He was conveyed home, and as he passed through the streets the brilliant illuminations and the tumultuous rejoicing of the populace presented a painful contrast to the sorrow of the venerable old man.

On reaching home he was unable to utter a word; but his silence and the despair depicted in his countenance sufficed to inform Madame Ducrest of the fate of her husband's son, to whom she was as fondly attached as though he had been her own.

On the morning after this fatal event, Madame de Montesson, M. Ducrest's aunt, sent her carriage for the removal of the afflicted family. She was tenderly attached to her grand-nephew, and his melancholy death proved a severe shock to her health, which had been long declining. M. Ducrest received the embraces and consolations of his aunt without shedding a tear. He had fallen into a state of apathy, which excited serious alarm.

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1 Such was the melancholy end of this fine young man, who had escaped death on the field of honour, where, at a very early age, his gallant conduct induced General Dumouriez to raise him to the rank of captain. "I have not yet attained the proper age," said M. Ducrest. "That is an additional reason for your receiving the honour," replied the general; and the rank was confirmed without a murmur of disapproval from his comrades.

At this moment Madame Bonaparte was announced ; on seeing the condition of M. Ducrest, she took his eldest daughter by the hand, and catching in her arms the youngest, who was only fifteen months, she threw herself with these two children at the feet of the disconsolate father.

The wife of the First Consul, whose maternal heart suggested to her what was best calculated to move the feelings of a parent, succeeded in drawing tears from the eyes of M. Ducrest ; the apprehensions which had hitherto been entertained for his life were now at an end. Madame Bonaparte prevailed on her husband to suppress the fêtes which had been the cause of the fatal event.

I was a witness to the scene above described, and I shall never forget it. I have not attempted to report the words of Josephine ; how would it be possible to describe the thrilling tones of her voice, and the expressive looks which accompanied them ! Every attempt hitherto made to portray the fascinations of the Empress Josephine has proved unsuccessful. Her pictures all fall short of the original. Grace, which from its fugitive nature is so difficult to seize and represent, was the distinguishing characteristic of that amiable woman, who was no less beloved in private life than she was adored on the throne.

I may here relate a few particulars of Madame de Montesson, whose house was at this period the only one frequented by returned emigrants—noblemen who had remained in France, *parvenus* enriched by spoil, celebrated men, and beautiful women. It was well known that Madame de Montesson had been married to the Duke d'Orleans, that Louis XVI. when at the Tuileries had

received her as *his cousin*, and played a game at tric-trac with her. She is said to have boasted of this relationship at a time when it might have been a sentence of death; and after she escaped, as if by a miracle, from the fate that awaited her, her amiable and unassuming manners exacted from everyone the respect which she was entitled to look for.

As soon as Bonaparte was raised to the Consulate, he sent to request that Madame de Montesson would present herself at the Tuileries. Whenever she appeared he rose to meet her, and assured her that he should feel pleasure in granting any boon she might think fit to solicit.

“General,” she replied, “I have no right to look for anything from you.”

“You have, then, forgotten, madam, that it was from you I received my first crown! You came with the Duke d’Orleans to distribute the prizes at Brienne; and when you placed on my brow the wreath of laurel, which was destined to be the precursor of so many others, you said,—‘May it bring you happiness!’ I am told that I am a Fatalist, madam; therefore it is not surprising that I should remember what you have forgotten. I shall be delighted to be serviceable to you. Besides, the tone of good company is nearly extinct in France; you must help to keep it up. Some traditions of former times will be useful, and you may communicate them to my wife. When foreigners of distinction visit Paris, they will be invited to your entertainments, where they will see that grace and amiability are still pre-eminent in the French capital.”

This was the origin of the favour enjoyed by

Madame de Montesson<sup>1</sup>; and during the remainder of her long life she employed it for the benefit of others, and never for her own revenge.

The remainder of her fortune, added to her restored pension, made her annual income upwards of 200,000 livres, a considerable sum for that period, when money was yet scarce. She never visited, but she received company every evening. On these occasions she reclined on a sofa, having her feet on a stool, and concealed beneath a cover. She never rose, except to receive or take leave of Madame Bonaparte, or to lead out someone whom she did not wish to see again. Whenever she attended anyone to the door, her meaning was always understood, and the persons to whom this ceremony was observed never presumed to return. Though brought up almost beneath her roof, I never saw more than two of her visitors dismissed in this way; they were persons who had become acquainted with her at the Waters of Plombières, and who ought never to have shown themselves in her saloon. She usually gave a grand dinner once a week, and on other days she received her intimate friends, for whom covers were always laid at her table. Her most frequent visitors were MM. Berthollet,<sup>2</sup> de Talleyrand, de Pont, Maret, Perignon, Villiers du Terrage, Arnault, Guines Millin, Desfaucherets, Garat, Aignan, Coupigny, Després and Isabey. The amusement of the evening consisted of music or reading; but most frequently, conversation.

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1 The Consul restored her the pension of 160,000 francs, which was granted to her by her husband.

2 Before the Revolution M. Berthollet's wife filled the situation called *femme de chambre harpiste* to Madame de Montesson, who was much attached to her.

## CHAPTER V

PORTRAIT OF MADAME DE MONTESSON—MADAME DE GENLIS  
AND M. DE VALENCE—LOUIS BONAPARTE'S MARRIAGE—  
BALL IN HONOUR OF THE KING OF ETRURIA—PORTRAIT  
OF THE QUEEN OF ETRURIA—FÊTE GIVEN AT NEUILLY BY  
M. DE TALLEYRAND—THE FIRST CONSUL'S GRACIOUS  
RECEPTION OF THE PRINCE OF ORANGE

MADAME DE MONTESSON, by her marriage with a Prince of the House of Bourbon, has become an historical character. Her influence in the most brilliant society in Europe, and the esteem in which she was held by the Emperor Napoleon, induced me to endeavour to sketch a portrait of her somewhat more accurate than those which have yet appeared in the shape of biographical memoirs, &c. The particulars that have been published respecting this lady are remarkable only for their incorrectness. I will here note down such as have come within my own observation.

I cannot pretend to say whether Madame de Montesson ever possessed the remarkable beauty that has been attributed to her. When I first saw her she was sixty-three years of age. She was then very little, and exceedingly thin; but her complexion and teeth were still beautiful. Her dark blue eyes were full of animation,

and her nose, though somewhat too long, was not unpleasing. She was extremely particular about her dress ; but she never wore anything unsuited to her age. She was fond of rich silks and lace. She never wore ornaments, and avoided glaring colours, generally wearing grey or white. The expression of her countenance was usually mild and benevolent ; but nobody knew better how to assume a cold and imposing air. However, it was only under very serious circumstances that she put on what she used to call her *mine fermée*.

Her dignity of manner, purity of language, and sweetness of temper, gave a charming freedom and vivacity to her conversation, and she always carefully avoided angry discussions at a period verging on anarchy. Literary men and artists eagerly sought her approbation, which was almost invariably the guarantee of public favour, and her house was the resort of the patrons and friends of art. She was never displeased with those whose opinions differed from her own. She supported her arguments with good temper ; and whenever she felt herself to be in the wrong, voluntarily acknowledged it. Good breeding was an indispensable requisite in those whom she admitted to her acquaintance. It was not sufficient that their manners were unobjectionable ; she required that pink of politeness and gallantry which is now so rarely met with ; however, she fully attained the object she had in view, for at her house young people amused themselves with the utmost freedom, but at the same time with a due regard to reserve and propriety.

Madame de Montesson detested scandal, which was never suffered in her presence ; she proclaimed silence whenever personalities formed the subject of conversa-

tion; she always entered into a warm defence of persons who were slandered when absent, even though her declared enemies. She had but one fault, that of treating some members of her family unjustly; but for this, perhaps, she must not be held entirely responsible.

She entertained an affectionate regard for M. de Valence, who had married her grand-niece, Mdlle. de Genlis.<sup>1</sup> M. de Valence ruled Madame de Montesson so completely that she had no will of her own: all her affairs were submitted to his consideration, and it was he, no doubt, who dictated her will, by which her relations though poor were disinherited. Twenty-thousand francs, a sum inferior to that which she left to her *femmes-de-chambre*, could not be considered a suitable legacy to her niece and nephew.

M. de Valence, instead of seeking to make amends for arrangements so adverse to the interests of Madame de Genlis and M. Ducrest, refused to give the latter a picture painted by Madame de Montesson, and out of his 20,000 francs kept back a sum in payment of a very old debt. He ought, perhaps, to have acted more generously, considering that all his property

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x Not her niece, as is erroneously stated by M. de Toulotte in his work entitled *La Cour et la Ville*. M. de Toulotte, indeed, seems to have known but little about Madame de Montesson and her family, for he asserts that Louis XV. wrote to the Archbishop of Paris, requesting his permission for the marriage of the Duke d'Orleans and Madame de Montesson; but it is certain that the permission was verbally granted on condition that the marriage should be kept secret until the birth of a child. As to the *considerable legacies* bequeathed by her to her family, we shall presently see what they were. I never saw M. de Toulotte at Madame de Montesson's; therefore he could speak of her only from hearsay; and I can affirm that he has been misinformed on several points.

was redeemed during the Revolution by Madame de Montesson, who for this purpose sacrificed her jewels.<sup>1</sup> Madame de Montesson must not, therefore, be accused of want of feeling, though she certainly exhibited great weakness during the latter years of her life. She feared M. de Valence as much as she loved him, and she submitted to all he required for the sake of maintaining peace at home, where he reigned with absolute sway.

Madame de Montesson gave the first ball that took place in honour of the marriage of Louis Bonaparte and Mdlle. de Beauharnais. Invitations were issued for seven hundred persons. There was as yet no Imperial Court, for Napoleon was only Consul: though then young, I could not fail to remark the eager attention and servile flattery evinced by all classes to the Bonaparte family, whose fortunes already dawned so brilliantly that there was no calculating what ambition might aim at when encouraged by such unexampled success. The foreign ambassadors were present at Madame de Montesson's fête, which was on a most magnificent scale. Every countenance beamed with joy save that of the bride, whose profound melancholy formed a sad contrast to the happiness which she might

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1 M. Ducrest brought about this marriage with Mdlle. de Genlis to whom Madame de Montesson gave a portion of 600,000 francs, to the prejudice of his direct heirs. On her daughter's account, therefore, Madame de Genlis had nothing to regret. M. Ducrest behaved very honourably throughout the whole business. He gave his niece the library and the diamonds of his first wife Mdlle. de Canouville. I gather these particulars from a letter written by Madame de Valence, who always remained grateful to her uncle. Madame de Genlis in her "Memoirs" says that Madame de Pont first projected the union; but that is a mistake.

have been expected to evince. She was covered with diamonds and flowers, and yet her countenance and manner shewed nothing but regret. It was easy to foresee the mutual misery that would arise out of this ill-assorted union. Louis Bonaparte shewed but little attention to his bride; and she, on her part, seemed to shun his very looks, lest he should read in hers the indifference she felt towards him.

This indifference daily augmented in spite of the affectionate advice of Josephine, who anxiously sought to produce some congeniality of feeling in the newly-married couple. But all her endeavours were useless.

I subjoin two letters which she wrote to her beloved daughter some time before her separation from her husband was deemed indispensable. They shew how earnestly Josephine desired to see Hortense in the possession of that happiness and peace of mind to which she was herself a stranger. Her daughter's unhappy marriage which she foresaw, but could not prevent, was a source of deep distress to her. If she enjoyed any consolation under this affliction, it was that of witnessing the uninterrupted harmony which prevailed between the viceroy and vice-queen. But after all, can anything soothe the sorrow of a mother who sees her daughter's happiness blighted for ever.

#### “ TO QUEEN HORTENSE.

“I was deeply grieved at what I heard a few days ago; and what I saw yesterday confirmed and increased my distress. Why shew this repugnance to Louis? Instead of rendering it the more annoying by caprice and inequality of temper, why not endeavour to surmount it?

You say he is not amiable ! everything is relative. If he is not so to you, he may be so to others, and all women do not see him through the veil of dislike. To me who am disinterested, and who view him as he really is, he appears to be more disposed to love than fitted to be beloved, and that is certainly a valuable quality. He is generous, benevolent and affectionate. He is a good father, and if you choose, he may be a good husband. His melancholy, and his taste for study and retirement, render him disagreeable to you. But let me ask you, is this his fault ? Do you expect him to change his nature according to circumstances ? Who could have foreseen his altered fortune ? You say he has not courage to maintain it ; but that is a mistake. I should rather say he is not suited to it. With his secluded habits and his unconquerable love of retirement and study, he is out of place in the elevated station to which he has been raised. You wish that he resembled his brother, but he must first have his brother's temperament. You must have remarked that all our existence depends on health, and health upon digestion. If poor Louis' digestion were better, you would find him much more amiable. But as he is, there is nothing to justify the indifference and dislike you evince towards him. You, Hortense, who used to be so good, should continue so now, when it is most requisite. Take pity on a man who is to be pitied, for what would constitute the happiness of another. Before you condemn him read once again the 'Letters of Madame de Maintenon' ; she too groaned under the weight of her greatness, and bedewed with her tears a diadem for which she conceived her brow was never destined."

## "TO THE SAME.

"You misunderstand me, my dear ; there is nothing equivocal in my style, as there is nothing uncandid in my heart. How could you ever imagine that I share certain absurd, or perhaps interested, opinions ? Surely you cannot believe that I look upon you as my rival. We both reign over the same heart, but by titles very different, though equally sacred ; and those who view my husband's affection for you in any other light than that of a friend and a father, know little of his heart. His soul takes too lofty a flight to be accessible to any vulgar passions. Glory engrosses him more, perhaps, than is conducive to our happiness ; but the love of glory is incompatible with anything base. Such is my profession of faith with regard to my husband. I frankly communicate it, in the hope that it will calm your apprehensions. When I advise you to love, or at least not to repulse Louis, I speak to you as an experienced wife, a fond mother, and a friend ; and in these three characters, which are all equally dear to me, I tenderly embrace you."

It was, I think, about this time that the King of Etruria arrived in Paris with his consort, his son, and some persons who were intended to form part of his modest Court. The presence of a Bourbon, who had been crowned by the hand of Bonaparte, was calculated to make a singular impression on every mind. The general opinion was that this was merely a prelude ; and that a still greater proof of disinterestedness would soon be given by the man who secretly congratulated himself on having thus overthrown all Royalist ideas and annihilated all Republican hopes. The King of Etruria lodged

at the "Hotel Montesson."<sup>1</sup> This hotel was built before the Revolution, and it communicated by a hot-house with the residence of the Duke d'Orleans, which Madame de Montesson now occupied. The hot-house had been condemned; but the King of Etruria on his arrival requested permission to have the communication opened, so that he might have the opportunity of visiting Madame de Montesson at all times without mingling with the crowd by whom she was surrounded. Madame de Montesson consented, and the King took ample advantage of his proximity to her.

The Queen regularly every day took her son to see her *voisine*, as she used familiarly to call Madame de Montesson. The child bore a striking resemblance to his mother, and therefore was not handsome. This Princess was exceedingly unprepossessing in appearance; she was a little dark, ugly woman, with a coarseness of manner which was exceedingly disagreeable. At seven in the morning she used to dress for the day, and nothing could be more amusing than to see her walking in the garden carrying her son in her arms, and wearing a llama dress, and diamonds on her head. She nursed her child, in the literal sense of the term, and this, as may be supposed, not a little deranged the elegance of her toilette, for the

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<sup>1</sup> Then occupied by the Spanish Embassy; but it was subsequently the scene of an awful catastrophe. On the marriage of the Empress Maria Louisa, Prince Schwarzenberg gave a fête at this house. The ball-room, which was erected in the garden, accidentally caught fire and several persons perished; among others were the Princesses of Schwarzenberg and La Leyen, both of whom rushed into the flames to rescue their daughters; the two young ladies escaped, but they had to deplore the fate of their amiable mothers. Mdlle. de la Leyen afterwards married M. de Tascher, a relative of Josephine. A few months after the misfortune above mentioned I saw her at Genoa in mourning, and dancing! . . .

Prince Royal was yet an infant in arms and was subject to all accidents incidental to his age. Whatever might happen, the Queen never took the trouble of changing her dress, carelessly observing that the sun would make it all right again. She was certainly a good sort of woman, in the strict acceptation of the phrase. She was unaffected, good humoured, and scrupulously attentive to her duty.

The King, though less clever, was more agreeable than his wife, in spite of a certain air of constraint which might be accounted for by the equivocal situation in which he stood.<sup>1</sup> He never spoke of Bonaparte but in terms of enthusiasm; and yet he seemed to regret being obliged to render justice to him, to whom he was indebted for his throne. Gratitude forced him to break the silence which old recollections imposed upon him.

Through the medium of the King of Etruria, Bonaparte tried the commencement of that power which he foresaw would soon be boundless. They both went to the Théâtre Français to see the tragedy of *Œdipe*. The audience eagerly seized the allusion conveyed in the following line :

"J'ai fait des souverains et n'ai pas voulu l'être."

It was followed by unanimous and repeated peals of

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x The account given of him by the Duke de Rovigo is greatly exaggerated. I used to see him frequently; but I must confess that I never surprised him playing at *hide-and-seek* or *leap frog*. Napoleon, who then paid attention to the government of conquered countries, would not have placed on the throne of Etruria a man entirely disqualified to rule. In appointing this *sort of prefect* he, of course, did not look for talent that might have resisted his will; but he would not at that time have ventured to violate the ideas of propriety by seating an idiot on the throne. The King of Etruria was a man of the ordinary stamp; and that is all that can in justice be said of him. In many eyes his greatest fault was being a Bourbon.

applause. This tragedy seemed destined to furnish applications complimentary to Napoleon.

"L'amitié d'un grand homme est un bienfait des dieux," was applied to him by the Emperor Alexander at Erfurt, and an audience of kings and princes approved it by loud testimonies of admiration.

Bonaparte sent the King of Etruria several magnificent presents: some carpets of the manufactures of Aubusson and la Savonnerie, and a Sèvres vase worth 300,000 francs. It was found necessary to fix up the vase in the King's grand saloon; and for this purpose twelve workmen were employed. When they had completed the job, one of the chamberlains asked the King what he should give them?

"Nothing at all," replied his majesty; "it is a present sent me by the First Consul."

"Yes, sire, but it is usual to give something to those who bring a present."

"That is *purchasing*, and not *accepting*. However, since it is the custom in France, I must conform with it; and besides, a king ought to encourage the arts. Let them have a *crown* a piece."

*Three louis* was the sum-total that was offered, and the men declined taking it.

Madame de Montesson gave a ball to the King and Queen of Etruria.<sup>1</sup> She did the honours with her ac-

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<sup>1</sup> I have just read in the "Memoirs of the Duke de Rovigo," an account of his fête, which is so offensive to the memory of Madame de Montesson that I cannot refrain from pointing out its inaccuracy. M. de Rovigo asserts, that Madame de Montesson was guilty of an impropriety which had well nigh been attended with unpleasant consequences to herself, in inviting to this ball all the members of the Consul's family and the individuals connected with them. They all accepted the invitation without informing Bonaparte of the

customed grace, so that the illustrious travellers had an opportunity of seeing that our Revolution had not banished gaiety and elegance from French society.

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circumstance, and next day they were sharply reprimanded for going to the ball. "The Revolution," he adds, "must have been adopted in all its consequences, before a *mistress of the Duke d'Orleans* could have conceived the idea of assembling at her party all the returned emigrants and men who had raised themselves by their talent." M. de Rovigo is, doubtless, not aware that the King consented to the Duke's marriage, and that during his detention at the Tuileries he received Madame de Montesson as his *cousin*. She was obliged to sign all her deeds the *Widow Orleans*, lest they should be rendered null and void. Napoleon, convinced of the reality of Madame de Montesson's marriage, gave her a pension of 60,000 francs as dowry, and she was constantly at the Tuileries, where she was overwhelmed with marks of esteem. Finally, when Josephine became Empress, she frequently went, attended by her ladies, to visit Madame de Montesson, whom she never suffered to rise to offer her a seat. The Princesses of the Imperial Family all visited at Romainville, and during Madame de Montesson's last illness one of the Emperor's pages was regularly sent to enquire after her. Had M. de Rovigo known these facts, he would, I am convinced, have erased from his manuscript a statement which was probably dictated by some private pique. Madame de Montesson did not like him, and I never recollect having seen him among her visitors. The reports then in circulation, whether true or false, prevented her from receiving him. It is difficult to suppose that a man, devoted as M. de Rovigo was to the will of Napoleon, should have ventured to attend a fête given in honour of a Bourbon without first consulting the man for whom, as he himself states, he would have sacrificed his own children. Even had he shewn such a want of circumspection on this occasion, it is still less probable that the Consul's family should have acted with such levity. All the details which I have given respecting the reception of Madame de Montesson at the Tuileries are strictly true, and can be vouched for by those who enjoyed her intimacy. A thousand witnesses could be immediately produced to defend this amiable woman against that unjust calumny from which she might have been spared by a man who knew her too little to judge her, and whose opinion would carry with it considerable weight if mis-statements were not corrected by truth. Mdlle. Marquise was the *mistress* of the Duke d'Orleans; Madame de Montesson was his *wife*.

M. de Talleyrand also gave an entertainment to their majesties at the Chateau de Neuilly, which then belonged to him. The park was illuminated by reflecting lamps, displaying a representation of the front of the royal palace at Parma, which was to be the residence of the King and Queen. A concert in which our first singers performed preceded the ball, which was opened by the King and Madame Leclerc, afterwards Princess Borghèse. The supper was served in the most elegant style in a spacious dining-room, the tables being laid out round orange trees, whose branches in full flower formed arches over the heads of the guests. Ices in the form of fruits were suspended in beautiful baskets. In short, the imagination could conceive nothing more delightful.

The illustrious strangers must have carried with them a very favourable opinion of France, where they were received with marks of attention which they did not experience even in Italy.

The Prince of Orange, now King of the Netherlands, was among the distinguished visitors whom Madame de Montesson was directed to receive. His virtues, talents, dignified manners and his misfortunes, ensured him an agreeable reception from a woman who was so well able to appreciate merit of every kind. He was pleased with her society, and frequently visited her. His countenance was handsome and full of expression, and his conversation animated. He never betrayed anything approaching to meanness or servility. Bonaparte loaded him with attentions, and in the most marked way evinced his esteem for him. Since his accession to the throne, this Prince has fully justified all the expectations that were formed of him.

## CHAPTER VI

M. CHAPTAL, MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR—MADAME LEBRUN—MDLLE. DUCHESNOIS PRESENTED TO MADAME BONAPARTE—HER DÉBUT—RIVALRY BETWEEN MDLLE. GEORGES AND MDLLE. DUCHESNOIS—M. DE LAVAL'S BON MOTS—MADAME RÉCAMIER—MM. DE FORBIN, HUMBOLDT, BENJAMIN CONSTANT, CHÂTEAUBRIAND, MATHIEU DE MONTMORENCY—PORTRAIT OF MADAME RÉCAMIER—M. DE TALLEYRAND AND MADAME GRANDT—M. DENON—M. DE COBENTZEL AND MADAME BONAPARTE—PARSIMONY OF AN AMBASSADOR—MADAME DE STAËL

M. CHAPTAL, the Minister of the Interior, refused to grant an order for the *début* of Mdlle. Duchesnois, being persuaded that she was too ugly to succeed. Madame Lebrun, who was a warm patroness of the arts, in one of which she herself excelled, kindly requested Madame de Montesson to grant Mdlle. Duchesnois an evening at her house.

She also begged that she would invite Madame Bonaparte and M. Chaptal. Madame de Montesson consented to do so, and assembled about two hundred persons on the occasion.

Mdlle. Duchesnois was at that time frightfully thin, and much more masculine in appearance than she

now is. Her dress, which was more than plain, was arranged as well as it could be by Madame Lebrun, who perfectly understood the art of female decoration. After a few hasty preparations, Mdlle. Duchesnois recited the part of *Phèdre* and a portion of *Roxane* in such admirable style that the minister, like everyone else, losing sight of the young lady's plain features, immediately gave an order for her *début*. Madame Bonaparte undertook the task of arranging her costume, and Madame de Montesson presented her with two beautiful dresses. It was determined that she should first perform at Versailles, in order to accustom her to the boards.

Almost all Madame de Montesson's friends attended this first appearance, and witnessed the commencement of that success which subsequently led to disputes and arrests. Nothing short of transcendent talent could have triumphed over the incomparable beauty of Mdlle. Georges. Mdlle. Duchesnois was supported by almost all the young students of medicine and law. She was known to be under the special patronage of Madame Bonaparte, a circumstance which had a powerful influence on a set of young men who were disposed to approve of anything that was agreeable to the wife of the First Consul.

To promote the prosperity of our home manufactures, Bonaparte directed that the ladies who appeared at the Tuileries should not wear any articles of foreign production. Madame Bonaparte had a great number of India dresses embroidered with gold and silver; these she gave to her *protégée*, who thus became possessed of a splendid wardrobe. She also gave her a magnificent set of topaz ornaments which she herself had received from M. de

Souza, the Portuguese minister.<sup>1</sup> In short, she supported the *débutante* through all the cabals that were raised against her, and enabled her to continue the representative of tragic queens in spite of all the endeavours that were made to force her out of that line of characters. Had Mademoiselle Duchesnois realized the promises that at this time she held out, we should have been indebted to Josephine for a second Clarion worthy to compete with our Talma.

There are many people in the world who acquire reputation to which they have no right. Of this number was the Duke de Laval, who was generally looked upon as a fool. Many anecdotes were related in proof of his supposed stupidity. It used to be said of him that he declared he had received an *anonymous* letter signed by all the officers of his regiment, that he had placed sofas on the *four sides* of his octagonal drawing-room, and a thousand other absurdities of this kind.

Madame de Montesson, who was certainly very well able to judge of the understandings of those with whom she was acquainted, denied that M. de Laval deserved the character of a fool. She related several of his *bon-mots*, which certainly tended to discredit the opinion generally entertained of him.

He used to be her daily visitor, but on one occasion he happened to tell her that he should not be able to come next day. She was therefore rather surprised to see him enter as usual.

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<sup>1</sup> He married Madame de Flahault, the authoress of the charming novels of "Adèle de Sénanges," "Eugène de Rothelin," &c. To extraordinary talent this lady united all that amiability of character which compels inferior minds to pardon that superiority which they cannot dispute.

"I thought you told me you could not come to-day," said she.

"Mon Dieu! I had indeed a thousand things to do, and I did not expect to see you. But I know not how it is, my horses bring me here as naturally as those of a devotee carry her to church."

He was very rich, and people often applied to him for a loan of money which he always refused, observing that he made it a rule never to lend, because the best thing that could happen was to have it returned. It would be difficult to quote an instance of more complete selfishness; but this was not the reasoning of a fool.

On arriving in England at the time of his emigration he visited several noblemen who had received him well before the Revolution. Almost all repeated the civility, but some few thought proper to dispense with it. Among the latter was the Duke of D——, who did not even think it worth while to leave his card at the lodgings of a man who he supposed was a beggar.

Some time after, they both met together at Lord Cholmondeley's. M. de Laval was requested by his lordship to take a hand at whist with the Duke of D——. The latter observed that M. de Laval would probably decline the invitation, when he knew what they were going to play for. I beg your grace's pardon, said he, I play from one guinea to a hundred a point; and for that reason I am surprised that you did not return my visit.

M. de Laval had brought from France a sum of money which enabled him to indulge his passion for play; besides he made his success at the card-table an object of speculation; he never played at hazard, and

had in all other kind of games an acknowledged superiority. From vanity, many were proud of being allowed to make a match with him, and he confessed that at the end of the year he found himself in possession of a considerable sum, which put it in his power to maintain a suitable rank in London. Among the emigrants who were obliged to look about them for means of subsistence, he was the only one who chose to rely on this source, and it certainly required a clever head to carry his plan into execution. He is another proof of the false judgments often pronounced on men by the busy world.

The beauty of Madame Récamier, her magnificent entertainments in the days of her prosperity, and the simplicity of the costumes which she adopted, have often been the subject of eulogy; but at the same time it was common to talk of the weakness of her mind, for the purpose, doubtless, of attributing some imperfections to the most perfect of her sex; for her conduct, which was always irreproachable, could not be calumniated. This was again an instance of gross injustice. Madame Récamier is no less distinguished for her intellectual qualities than for her personal charms; but an invincible abhorrence to whatever looks like malignity makes her despise that sort of mental vanity which would sacrifice everything to a witticism. Her conversation is delightful, though she never makes any effort to shine. She speaks in a low voice to those who please her, and whom she attracts around her. That she is not entirely engrossed by attention to personal display is sufficiently proved by her intimate connection with the two most celebrated women of our age, Madame de Genlis and Madame de Staël,

MM. de Forbin, Humboldt, Benjamin Constant, Châteaubriand, Mathieu de Montmorency, &c., have sought her society with an eagerness which proves how capable she is of embellishing her circle. Men of letters often solicit her opinion on their works, which she always gives with that modesty which is natural to her.

Full justice has never been done to the courage she displayed on the ruin of her husband's fortune. She regretted the loss of immense wealth only because it deprived her of the power of doing good. It was then discovered that this woman so idolized, so involved in a course of compulsory dissipation, had founded a school for twelve orphan girls who were taught reading, writing, arithmetic and needlework, and were fully prepared, by the age of fifteen, for going into any line of business. Their benefactress afforded them the means of turning what they had earned to advantage, and when they conducted themselves well they received a portion which enabled them to form a settlement for life.

Those who followed the elegant carriage of Madame Récamier under the persuasion that she was going to make purchases at Leroi's, or at the Petit-Dunkerque, were often surprised to see it stop at the door of some obscure house, where this amiable lady would alight to administer succour to aged poverty, or to give a packet of child-bed linen to some distressed woman on the point of becoming a mother without having the means of clothing her unfortunate infant.

I have seldom the happiness of meeting Madame Récamier, but when I do see her I cannot look upon a countenance still so beautiful and so perfectly calm without experiencing a profound feeling of sadness. It

is impossible to suppose that vice could exist in connection with such an expression of purity. The whole life of Madame Récamier gives support to the system of Lavater.

About the time at which the circumstances I have related occurred, much astonishment was expressed at the love of M. de Talleyrand for Madame Grandt, who, though extremely beautiful, had no idea of the superiority of the man whom she had charmed. M. de Talleyrand, on being asked how he could converse with one so uninformed, replied: "It is a relief to me." This phrase well describes the woman he afterwards married.<sup>1</sup>

He one day requested her to read Denon's "Travels in Egypt," that she might be able to say a few words on it to the author whom he had invited to dinner. Madame promised to follow her husband's advice, and he sent her the book. The hour of dinner arrived, and M. Denon was seated beside the lady of the house. Wishing to follow the instructions she had received, she began by

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1 Bonaparte when he became Emperor, wishing to restore that decorum which the Revolution had banished, resolved to put an end to the scandal to which the connection between M. de Talleyrand and Madame Grandt gave occasion. He hinted to the minister the propriety of a marriage. Talleyrand at first refused, but the master having ordered, obedience soon followed. The Princess de Talleyrand was presented at Court under that title, but she was received there only once; she never visited the Court again. The Princess Dolgorouki paid her a visit, covered with rich jewels which she inherited from Prince Potemkin.—"Oh, madam," said the Princess de Talleyrand, "what beautiful diamonds! How happy they must make you!"—"If you wish for the like, M. de Talleyrand will surely have great pleasure in giving you them."—"How foolish," retorted Madame de Talleyrand, "do you think I have married a *Pope*!" I have this anecdote from the Princess Dolgorouki.

informing him that she had been delighted with the perusal of his beautiful descriptions. There were no bounds to the praise of his wonderful talent. "There is but one thing," said she, "with which I can find fault, and that is that the dear creature *Friday* comes in too late. He is so interesting that I wish I had known him sooner." The embarrassment and astonishment of M. Denon may be conjectured. He was unable to reply.

Mdlle. Charlotte<sup>1</sup> had on the same day left a copy of "Robinson Crusoe" with her protectress. The Princess read it by mistake for Denon's work, and hence the enthusiasm she felt for Friday.

I do not pretend to understand what are called grand conceptions in politics, which appear to me to be only a series of impostures. I shall therefore refrain from speaking on a subject so far above me; but I may be allowed to quote some of the sayings of this extraordinary man, who has always been able to extricate

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<sup>1</sup> Now the Baroness Alexander de Talleyrand, celebrated for her talent on the pianoforte. She was the pupil of Dusseck, whom M. de Talleyrand got to reside in his house that the lessons might be given with perfect regularity. He was lodged and boarded, and received a salary of 6,000 francs. It is said, however, that the Prince did not behave with as much kindness as he should have done at the period of Dusseck's decease. It has been taken for granted that Mdlle. Charlotte was a natural daughter of M. de Talleyrand, which is not the fact. My mother was acquainted with her parents, who were emigrants. The Prince, who was related to Madame de —, learning that on her death-bed she was distressed about the fate of her little girl, promised to take charge of the infant; he kept his word. Her education was solid and brilliant, and her marriage with the cousin of her protector completed the discharge of the debt he had contracted. The Princess was extremely kind and attentive to her, and it is said her goodness has been ill repaid, for Madame Alexander no longer visits her.

*MADAME RÉCAMIER*

*After the painting by Baron François Gérard*



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himself from the greatest difficulties, and who has floated safely amidst a torrent of events by which any other person would have been borne away and overwhelmed.

Every clever thing said in Paris used to be attributed to him, and this proves that he is capable of saying many. Some are so connected with history that it is impossible to forget them; but others, which relate to individuals, are less known. It is difficult to conceive how he could acquire the astonishing facility of making the simplest circumstance, the most common subject, serve as an occasion for the display of what may be called his *prompt-payment* wit, the command of which, I believe, no other man ever possessed in an equal degree. Here are a few examples:

M. A—— de G——, noted for his dulness, his pretension, his unaccountable success with some women, and his large fortune, accosted M. de Talleyrand at a time when an anxious suspense prevailed on account of the vacillating system of the Government, and said:

“Well, Prince, how go public affairs?”

“Why, just as you see! <sup>1</sup>”

The beauty of the Marchioness de Luchesini, the wife of the Prussian ambassador<sup>2</sup> was extolled in M. de Talleyrand's presence:

“We have handsomer specimens in our Consular Guard,” said he.

This remark appeared so just that henceforth the

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1 To understand the force of this reply it is necessary to know that M. Alex. de G—— squinted and looked quite awry.

2 A dark-complexioned, masculine, German lady, who, thanks to her title, her fortune, and certain petty airs which sometimes prove attractive, acquired the reputation of being handsome.

colossal Prussian beauty was no longer spoken of in terms of admiration.

The Parisians often diverted themselves at the expense of the Count de Cobentzel,<sup>1</sup> the second ambassador of that name who came to France. His reputation for avarice was so great that Josephine, then Madame Bonaparte, resolved to play a trick upon him.

On a Court day she chose him for her partner at whist. He was unfortunate, and lost several rubbers in succession. On every occasion of ill luck his partner said to him: "I am really vexed, Count, to see you losing in this way; but you will be more fortunate next time;" and addressed a thousand other phrases to him which cut him to the heart, as he was fully persuaded that the wife of the First Consul must be playing for very high stakes. His vexation increased, and, notwithstanding his Court habits, he could not conceal it. Madame Bonaparte committed fault on fault, which tripled the torment of her unfortunate partner, whose distress augmented to such a degree that large drops of perspiration appeared on his forehead. At last cards were given up, and the trembling ambassador asked, in a querulous voice, how much he had to pay.

"Nothing, Count," said Josephine, "and that will explain to you the philosophy with which I supported our run of bad luck."

On hearing these words the whole expression of

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1 He must not be confounded with his relation Count Louis de Cobentzel, who was no less amiable as a man than skilful as a politician (the Duke de Rovigo says they were brothers, but that, I believe, is a mistake); he left at Paris friends whose very names are sufficient to honour his character: MM. Maret and Segur. The latter has mentioned him with just praise in his interesting "Memoirs."

the Count's countenance was instantly changed. He was overjoyed at the thought of escaping with nothing worse than a fright. This man had an annual income of 200,000 livres.

He was very much scandalized at the extravagant expenditure of the Minister for Foreign Affairs ; and on seeing enormous fires lighted in all his apartments, he peevishly observed that he would allow no such doings in his house, for it must cost a great deal.

"Not quite so much as the mines of Peru, Count," replied M. de Talleyrand, with that satirical air which was peculiar to him.

This reply, which was so much at variance with M. de Talleyrand's accustomed politeness, elicited a loud burst of laughter ; and the poor ambassador must have been convinced that his niggardly disposition was fully understood.

As Madame de Staël was one day playing with a party of friends at a game called *the boat*, she asked M. de Talleyrand whether he would save her or Madame de Grandt. This was an embarrassing question, for it happened to be put at the very time when Talleyrand's attachment for the former lady was on the decline, and he was beginning to conceive a passion for the latter, who was a very different person.

"You, madam, possess so much talent," he replied, "that you can extricate yourself from any danger : therefore, I would save Madame de Grandt."

Certainly it would have been difficult to say an ungracious thing more gracefully.

Talleyrand used to say that the Bailli de F—— was the bravest man in all France, for he ventures to swallow

what his teeth masticate, and to walk upon spindle shanks which every moment seem ready to snap under him.

I never was personally acquainted with M. de Talleyrand, but I have heard, through the medium of some of his friends, traits that reflect honour on his heart, and which prove that his caustic turn of wit is not incompatible with amiable feeling.

## CHAPTER VII

THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE'S HOUSEHOLD — MADAME DE MONTMORENCY—IMPERTINENCE OF MADAME DE CHEVREUSE—THE EMPEROR EXILES HER TO LYONS—MM DE MAILLÉ' AND FITZ-JAMES — M. DE COMMINGES, NAPOLEON'S COLLEGE COMPANION — MM. DE C.—THE EMPEROR'S REPLY—THE DUKE DE LUVNES—SINGULAR WILL

MADAME DE CHEVREUSE, who was appointed Dame du Palais to the Empress, fell into the error of behaving with a certain degree of unbecoming impertinence, at the suggestion, probably, of some silly advisers, who persuaded her that it was a fine thing to shew herself independent of *Madame Bonaparte*, as the Empress was still called in several of the saloons of the Faubourg Saint-Germain.

A young and pretty woman may, perhaps, be pardoned for supposing that she can lead a fashion or set an example; but Madame de Chevreuse, with her excellent understanding, should have felt that when she once accepted the situation she ought to have fulfilled its duties without servility or flattery, but with becoming dignity. Such was the line of conduct adopted by Madame de Montmorency, who was appointed at the same time with Madame de Chevreuse, and who was no more than the latter lady an admirer of the new order

of things. Her behaviour was always correct, without anything approaching to adulation; and I have frequently heard the Empress say that she preferred this honest reserve to the eager attentions of the other ladies, who, as soon as they left the Tuileries, used to complain that their situation had been forced upon them.

The Emperor justly appreciated the manner in which Madame de Montmorency behaved at Court. He had received from the Grand Sultan a present of a magnificent diamond aigrette; this he divided, and gave one half to Madame de Montmorency as a pledge of esteem; it was deserved. This was no mean compliment at a time when servility and selfishness seemed to have absorbed every generous feeling.

The Emperor was struck with the contrast between the conduct of Madame de Montmorency and that of Madame de Chevreuse; to the latter lady he shewed his displeasure very unequivocally, and banished her a hundred leagues from Paris. She went to Lyons, where her mother-in-law followed her, and treated her with the most affectionate attention. It would have been better, perhaps, to have overlooked this sort of misconduct; to notice it, was to make it of too much importance.

The Empress, whose heart was a stranger to revenge, with her usual good nature repeatedly solicited the recall of Madame de Chevreuse, but without success. The Emperor, to all her applications, replied,—

“I will have no impertinence *here* !”

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x Madame de Chevreuse one day went to the Tuileries splendidly dressed, and in a blaze of diamonds. The Emperor, struck with her dazzling appearance, said: “What a splendid display of jewels! are they all real?”—“Mon Dieu! sire,” replied the lady, “I really don’t know; but, at any rate, they are good enough to wear *here*.”

To this he ought to have limited his displeasure. Such an observation, in the palace of the Kings of France, was sufficient to make everyone feel the elevation to which he had raised himself ; since almost all the old dukes and peers were his servants.<sup>1</sup>

He loved to have the old nobility about him, and made strict enquiries after the members of illustrious families who did not offer their services. In this spirit he summoned to his presence MM. de C——, and asked them various questions, to which they replied very awkwardly. He offered them commissions in the army, supposing, from the name they inherited, that military service would be the mode by which they would prefer to attach themselves to his person. They refused, and accepted the office of chamberlains ! The Emperor then turned from them, and said, with evident displeasure,—

“How I have been deceived ; it is impossible that these gentlemen can be the descendants of the gallant C—— ! ”

He also sent for M. de Comminges, who had been his fellow-pupil in the military school.

“What have you been about during the Revolution ? have you been in the army ? ”

“No, sire.”

“Then you followed the Bourbons in their exile ? ”

“Oh, no, sire, I stayed at home and cultivated my little estate.”

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<sup>1</sup> We must except MM. de Maille, Fitz-James, and de Crussol, who would never accept any office under the Imperial Government, but lived in retirement on their half-ruined estates. In vain they were threatened with Vincennes ; they felt that the respectability of their conduct would secure them against imprisonment. They accordingly remained at home, and judged rightly ; they always supported their character.

"That was very silly; in times of trouble everyone owes a debt, which he is bound to pay personally, one way or the other. But what do you mean to do now?"

"Sire, a small place in the Exchequer of our little town will satisfy all my desires."

"Very well, sir, you shall have it, and there you will remain. Is it possible that I can have been the companion of such a man!" said the Emperor, on dismissing him.

In fact, such conduct could not be comprehended by the Emperor, who when at the military school was an object of jealousy with the other pupils, because he was always held up to them as an example of perseverance.

"You Corsican dog," they would say to him, "you are nothing but a sulker; you only want to gain the favour of the masters."

"You will see what a Corsican can do," was his reply.

These youths, however, rendered justice to his rising genius; for in their warlike sports he was their leader, and commanded his juvenile play-fellows with as much authority and decision as he afterwards did men, when he controlled the destiny of empires. His plastic instruments murmured then, as they have done since, when he was out of sight; but when he re-appeared, all was submission. His uncommon genius, and that air of superiority which distinguished him, even in the presence of the sovereigns, his allies, imposed obedience on all around him.

## CHAPTER VIII

CONSPIRACY OF GEORGES CADOU DAL—MM. DE POLIGNAC  
AND THEIR AUNT—M. DE RIVIÈRE AND MADAME DE LA  
FORCE—VERSES ADDRESSED TO THAT LADY—CHARLES  
D'OZIER—M. DE ST. VICTOR—MARSHAL PERIGNON

MADAME DE MONTESSON purchased a small house at Romainville, whither she retired to avoid the daily fatigue of Paris society, and to cultivate flowers, of which she was passionately fond, and which served her as models for her charming pictures. She was one of the cleverest pupils of Vanspandoenk. Being, however, desirous of gradually drawing around her some unfortunate friends, she was for their accommodation obliged to build.

Her intimate friend, M. Brongniart, the celebrated architect,<sup>1</sup> was employed to make the necessary additions, and the rural habitation was speedily converted into one

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1 We are indebted to him for the plan of the Exchange. That superb edifice was begun under his superintendence, but death prevented him from seeing it finished. M. Brongniart was a clever, lively man, and he possessed the art of mimicking the voices of different individuals. When the titles of *archi-chancelier* and *archi-trésorier* were created, he humorously observed that he would rather be an *architect*, for that was a thing not so easily made. M. Brongniart, the director of the royal Sèvres manufactory, is his son.

of the most charming residences in the neighbourhood of Paris.<sup>1</sup>

The house was furnished throughout in the most elegant style, especially the bed-chamber of Madame de Montesson. At the side of her bed was a large panel of plate-glass, through which was seen a spacious greenhouse, filled with the choicest flowers. In the middle was the winter room, which was commonly used as a breakfast-parlour, and the delicious fragrance of the plants and the warbling of a multitude of birds rendered the place truly enchanting.

In this delicious retreat Madame de Montesson passed the last years of her life, her only Paris residence being some apartments in a hired hotel. The circle which she assembled round her was composed of the most select society of Paris; and Romainville was a fashionable place of resort. The intelligent and kind-hearted hostess was always happy when she saw others equally so around her. Her constant companions were her beautiful and accomplished nieces, Madame de Valence and Madame Ducrest, the latter a charming singer; Madame Robaday, a pupil of Steibelt, and celebrated for her proficiency on the pianoforte; Mdlles. de Valence and Ducrest; Mesdames de Rigaut and Delatour. Her dinner parties were always attended by men distinguished for talent and information. The charming Madame Récamier, who though in the zenith

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<sup>1</sup> It is now in the possession of the Marquis de Livry, who is said to have won it from the Count de Valence, to whom it devolved by inheritance. I cannot pretend to say whether or not it was really lost at the gaming-table; but it is strange that the grand-nephew of Madame de Montesson, who was loaded with her bounties, should have parted with a residence which she created.

of her beauty, seemed anxious to conceal her own attractions to enhance those of others; Madame Regnault de Saint-Jean-d'Angely, whose beautiful countenance presented a perfect resemblance to that of Niobe; Madame de Talleyrand, with her noble figure and brilliant complexion, the graceful Madame de Barral, the lovely Madame de Bassano, the majestic Visconti,<sup>1</sup> and finally, the incomparable Princess Pauline Borghèse, invariably graced Madame de Montesson's fêtes. That such assemblies should prove attractive beyond all others cannot be a matter of surprise. The Empress and Queen Caroline frequently breakfasted and spent a day with Madame de Montesson. Those visits were always hailed with joy by the neighbouring poor, among

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1 Though turned fifty years of age, she still retained traces of exquisite beauty, and inspired the Prince de Wagram with so violent a passion that he wanted to divorce her from her husband and marry her. The Emperor opposed this; and, to deprive him of all hope of ever accomplishing his wishes, he brought about a marriage between him and the Princess of Bavaria. Shortly after the celebration of this union, M. Visconti died. "How vexatious that this did not happen a little sooner!" exclaimed the disconsolate widow. Madame Visconti possessed a considerable share of natural talent, with but little information. Her Italian accent, and her frequent smart sallies, rendered her conversation exceedingly agreeable. A young lady of my acquaintance, who formed a love match which turned out very unhappily, being on a visit to Madame Visconti, the latter said to her: "I know what love is; it has made me act foolishly and imprudently, but it never betrayed me into anything so stupid as this." The influence she exercised over the Prince de Wagram was inferior only to that of the Emperor. He loaded her with valuable presents, by which means she became possessed of an immense stock of jewels. By her will she has bequeathed the whole of her property to the young Prince de Wagram. "Lightly come, lightly go," as she herself observed. Madame Visconti is generally beloved for her kind and amiable disposition. A paralytic affection has now almost entirely destroyed that beauty which Time so long respected.

whom Josephine's presence never failed to diffuse happiness.

The pleasures of Romainville were interrupted in a tragical way. The conspiracy of Georges was discovered, and the newspapers mentioned the arrest of the accused parties, among whom were MM. de Polignac. Their aunt, Madame de la Tour, entreated Madame de Montesson to intercede in their behalf with her who was ever ready to aid the distressed. Regardless of the orders of her physician, who strictly enjoined repose, Madame de Montesson ordered her carriage, and drove to St. Cloud, where she obtained Josephine's promise to employ her interest in favour of MM. de Polignac and de Rivière.<sup>1</sup> When the fatal sentence was pronounced,

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1 It has been said, that their pardon was granted at the solicitation of Murat. Having been intimately acquainted with the individuals to whom I now allude, I can vouch for the correctness of the following statement: Murat certainly conjured his brother-in-law to observe clemency to all the accused, which he said would gain him popularity; but he specified no prisoner in particular. Madame de Montesson obtained the pardon, which she solicited with all the ardour of friendship. Madame Bonaparte found the Consul inclined to grant the pardon of MM. de Polignac, which had also been solicited by General Savary, Duc de Rovigo. Among the ladies who were present at this celebrated trial was the Duchess de la Force, and M. de Rivière, recognizing her in court, sent her some verses which he had hastily scratched with pencil on a slip of paper:

"A prison is a place of woe,  
I'll prove it by example;  
'Tis bad in the central bureau,  
And far worse in the Temple.  
In the Abbey one is never free  
From sorrow or remorse.  
No prisoner, then, can happy be,  
But the prisoner of *La Force*."

To improvise thus, under the weight of an accusation that might have ended with a sentence of death, is truly characteristic of a Frenchman.

Madame de Montesson again repaired to Madame Bonaparte, and obtained a commutation of the punishment of the three unfortunate men who were destined subsequently to play so brilliant a part in public events. She extended her intercession to several other individuals, but succeeded only in favour of M. Charles d'Hozier, who probably never knew what voice was raised in his behalf.

It was found impossible to avert the fate of M. Coster de Saint-Victor, whose handsome person excited general interest, and whose death was truly heroic.<sup>1</sup>

The numerous executions which took place at this period rendered Paris as gloomy as it had previously been gay. The fate of these elevated servants of the Bourbons could not be easily forgotten at Romainville, where they were never alluded to but with feelings of regret and profound respect.

The return of the illustrious exiles was certainly an event never looked for, but an interest was attached to everything connected with them. Madame de Montesson was unremitting in her attentions to the duchess dowager and Mdlle. d'Orleans, to whom the Emperor had granted an annuity of 100,000 francs. If the payments happened to be delayed, urgent applications were made for them, and nothing was neglected which could be agreeable to the Princesses. The glory of the French arms was dear to the *cousin* of the Bourbons. At Romainville every victory was celebrated by illuminations, and by distribution of alms to the poor.

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<sup>1</sup> He exclaimed *Vive le Roi!* when his head was beneath the executioner's axe. He was nephew to Madame Coster, celebrated for the manner in which she painted flower pieces.

Many of our gallant commanders were the friends of Madame de Montesson, and she rejoiced in their triumphs, while at the same time she offered up prayers for the peace of those whom an odious Revolution had banished from their country. In short, there was more real French feeling at Romainville than anywhere else, for there misfortune was pitied and valour duly appreciated.

General Perignon enjoyed the intimate friendship of Madame de Montesson, a distinction for which he was partly indebted to the generous humanity he evinced at Parma to a Princess of the House of Bourbon.

The Princess, who had retired to a convent, was reduced to such a state of destitution that she must have wanted the indispensable necessities of life but for the kindness of some of the nuns.

These facts having come to the knowledge of General Perignon on his appointment to the Governorship of Parma, he resolved to extricate the Princess from her embarrassments in spite of any umbrage which the French Government might possibly take at such a proceeding. Generously waiving all consideration of self-interest, he visited the convent in which the Princess was languishing in poverty; he presented her with his purse, with which he requested she would repay the money she had been compelled to borrow; and having furnished her with everything that could alleviate her distress, he promised to write to France in her behalf.

This promise he did not forget, in spite of the weight of business that pressed upon him. He wrote to the Directory, representing that it was inconsistent with the dignity of the French Government to allow the

Princess to be in want. In short, he pleaded her cause so successfully that he obtained for her a pension of 30,000 francs, which was regularly paid till her death.

The Princess cherished the warmest gratitude towards the general, whom she constantly addressed by the name of *father*. After he quitted Parma she wrote to him frequently, and always in the most affectionate terms. I have heard the marshal extol her excellent disposition, and congratulate himself on the happiness he experienced in furnishing her with the means of exercising the first of all virtues, benevolence.

The honourable conduct of Marshal Perignon secured to him the respect of his fellow-citizens, and the love of all who enjoyed his acquaintance. Before the Revolution he served in the rank of lieutenant and aide-de-camp to Count Preissac, lieutenant-general of the King's forces, and it was only in the presence of the enemy that he lost sight of that moderation which formed the basis of his character. During the Reign of Terror he retired to his estate in Montech, where he lived beloved by his neighbours and blessed by the poor, and where he was unanimously chosen one of the magistrates of the district, and subsequently a member of the legislative assembly. Having become a member of the military committee, he exerted his endeavours to prevent the disorganization of the army, but without success. The fatal 10th of August arrived, and the deputies, who remained faithful to their King, narrowly escaping proscription, returned amidst a thousand dangers to their respective departments.

Being now restored to the rank of a private citizen, the name of Marshal Perignon might possibly have

swelled the list of the victims of that disastrous period, but that his courage and his ruling passion, the love of glory, once more led him into the career of arms.

He refused the command of the army of the west; but he reaped glorious laurels in Spain as lieutenant-colonel of the Legion of the Pyrenees, then the terror of the Spaniards.<sup>1</sup>

Courage and presence of mind were innate qualities in Marshal Perignon. He was not distinguished by brilliant parts; but he possessed that solid sense and correct judgment which are so requisite in the man who is destined to guide others in those critical moments when all depends on vigorous and prompt decision. He mainly contributed to the capture of Montesquiou, one of the most brilliant achievements in the history of French glory. In a decisive moment he seized the musket of a Grenadier, and marched forward, leading his men to the charge with the bayonet.

He was afterwards sent as ambassador to Spain; and despising all those diplomatic artifices which are founded on distrust and intrigue, he adopted a line of policy dictated solely by good faith.

He afforded support and protection to several emigrants; and when it was hinted to him that this might be displeasing to the French Government, he replied,—

“I know not what is meant by *emigrants*; I know

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From the ranks of this legion arose three French marshals: Bessières, Lannes, and Perignon; besides many distinguished generals and superior officers.

<sup>2</sup> Among others, the Duke d'Aumont, who constantly entertained the sincerest friendship for him.

them only as *Frenchmen*; and under that title, they may depend on it, I will never betray their confidence."

He was one of the last to recognize the forfeiture of Napoleon. He had taken oaths from which he did not think misfortune released him; and it was not until the Emperor's abdication was no longer a matter of doubt that he again entered the service of the Bourbons. During the hundred days, he refused to come from the south of France to join Napoleon, who in consequence erased his name from the list of marshals.

Louis XVIII. on his second return appointed Marshal Perignon Governor of Paris, observing that he consigned the trust to *fidelity itself*.

The Duke de Berri, who duly appreciated his noble conduct, received him with the most marked attention. From among the many handsome compliments he paid him, I may quote the following:

"The baton confers no honour on you, Marshal;" said his Royal Highness, "it is you who honour it."

He died leaving behind him very little fortune, but his unsullied reputation is the noblest inheritance he could bequeath to his children.

These particulars are chiefly gathered from the address delivered to the Chamber of Peers by his colleague General Ricard.

Madame de Montesson, whose health had been declining since her arrest, became so seriously ill in 1805 that it was found necessary to remove her to Paris; there she was attended by MM. Corvisard and Hallé, who, together with M. Couad, her own physician, declared that there were no hopes of her life.

She had passed eighteen months in prison, and

during that time had suffered privations of every kind. By a refinement of cruelty the place of confinement selected for her was exactly facing her own hotel, so that from the windows of her prison she could see her garden, through which were constantly passing those kind friends who, at the risk of forfeiting their own liberty, ventured to call and make enquiries for her. In those fearful times a look or a gesture might lead to the scaffold. Madame de Montesson received the most affecting proofs of attachment from several of her faithful servants. Her principal *femme de chambre* left four children ill with the small-pox, rather than forsake the mistress by whom she had been brought up, and who, when restored to fortune, treated her like a friend. Madame Naudet dined with her regularly when only her usual circle was present. Such disinterested friendship well deserved the affection which was sincerely returned to that excellent woman, who is the mother of a family distinguished for virtue and talent.

Madame de Montesson died on the 5th of February, 1806. Throughout her illness her patience never forsook her, and her lips never gave utterance to a complaint.<sup>1</sup> Her last moments were soothed by the affectionate and

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1 The Emperor directed that Madame de Montesson should be interred with the honours usually rendered to a Princess. She lay in state for eight days in an illuminated chapel at Saint-Roch, a thing which was at that time very unusual. As her coffin was being carried to the hearse, which was to convey her remains to Saint-Assise, where she had expressed a wish to be interred beside her husband, it was met on the steps by the funeral procession of Mdlle. Marquise, the mistress of the Duke d'Orleans, and the mother of the Abbés de Saint-Farre, Saint-Albin, and Madame de Brossard. Thus death brought together two persons who seemed destined never to meet.

unremitting attention of her nieces, Mesdames de Valence and Ducrest; the former sat up almost every night by her bedside.

M. and Madame de Valence inherited the whole property of Madame de Montesson, with the exception of 20,000 francs bequeathed to M. Ducrest and Madame de Genlis. Her testamentary arrangements had been long foreseen, and consequently Madame de Genlis's attentions to her aunt were the more praiseworthy because they were wholly disinterested.

Madame de Montesson and Madame de Genlis never liked each other, though the latter lady was not wanting in the respect due to her distinguished relative. She wrote for her a charming tale, entitled *Les Réunions de Famille*, and during her illness paid her the most assiduous attention, visiting her as frequently as her occupations would permit. The justly acquired celebrity of Madame de Genlis, perhaps, excited some little jealousy on the part of Madame de Montesson; but be this as it may, she never cherished for her accomplished niece those sentiments of regard which her merits are calculated to inspire. It is to be regretted that any petty feeling of rivalry should have created disunion between two persons who seemed formed to love and appreciate each other. Pride, wounded by marked superiority, rendered Madame de Genlis something worse than an object of indifference to her aunt. But the wrongs, which were all on one side, are now buried in the grave. The manner in which Madame de Genlis always discharged her duty to her aunt is a proof of her amiable and forgiving nature.

The loss of Madame de Montesson was severely felt

in the brilliant circle which used to assemble at her house. No other lady was then in the habit of receiving so much company, except the Duchess de Luynes, at whose parties cards generally superseded conversation.<sup>1</sup> The saloon of the Duchess de Luynes would have been insupportably dull but for the presence of Madame de Chevreuse, who occasionally succeeded in engaging some of the company in amusements of a more agreeable and less dangerous kind than the rouge et noir table.<sup>2</sup>

M. de Luynes was so enormously fat that it was painful for him to move. A child might really have taken him for one of the ogres who so frequently figure in nursery tales. A curve was made in one of the card-tables to enable him to sit at it conveniently; he was an absolute monster. A young lady of my acquaintance, on being introduced to him at a ball, was so terrified at his enormous size that she fled into the ante-room.

When his will was opened after his death, it was discovered that by some unaccountable mistake he had post-dated it, and its provisions could not be carried into effect until a year after. This blunder annulled the testamentary arrangements. Madame Mathieu de Montmorency, out of respect to the memory of her father, wished the will to remain unaltered, in which she was seconded by her husband. M. de Chevreuse wished to annul the will, though its provisions were

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1 The closing of the gaming-houses drove many wealthy bankers to the parties of the Duchess de Luynes, where people might be ruined in fashionable company as speedily and completely as in any of the *hells* of the Palais Royal.

2 The Countess de la Ferté, the mother-in-law of the Duke de Rivière, and the Marchioness de Gaville, also permitted gaming at their parties.

greatly to his advantage; but he at length yielded to the representations of his amiable sister. This instance of filial piety is worthy of record in an age when the love of money so frequently prompts what is base and dishonourable. It is gratifying to bestow one's tribute of admiration to the memory of him who was so suddenly snatched from the family, of whom he was the pride and consolation, and from the numerous circle of friends whom he was ever ready to serve.

## CHAPTER IX

MADAME DE MONTESSON'S QUARREL WITH M. DUCREST  
—THE DUKE DE CHARTRES—HIS EMBARRASMENTS—  
M. SEGUIN, HIS TREASURER—THE PALAIS ROYAL LAID  
OUT FOR SHOPS—RESIGNATION OF M. DUCREST

THE cause of Madame de Montesson's aversion for her nephew, the Marquis Ducrest, was so honourable to the latter that it would be wrong to pass it over unnoticed. I shall here relate it; but in doing so it is necessary to go back to an earlier period.

When the Duke de Chartres espoused Mdlle. de Penthievre, an income of 800,000 livres was secured to him by the marriage contract, with the Palais Royal for his residence. This revenue could not be increased during the life of the Duke's father and father-in-law, because it consisted of a life annuity of 400,000 francs, and of rent arising from lands let on long leases. Free, however, from all incumbrance, such an income might very fairly at that time be considered sufficient, with prudent management, to maintain a prince of the blood in the splendour suitable to his rank. But this expectation was not realized.

The Duke de Chartres was not long married when he outran his income, and was obliged to resort to the

ruinous resource of borrowing. The two great fortunes of which he was the heir, readily procured him a very extensive credit, on which he drew without discretion. He adopted the ruinous practice of granting life annuities and spending, as fast as he received it, the money he borrowed on them. The payment of the annuities, added to his annual expenses, placed him every year under the necessity of progressively increasing the amount of his loans. Had he paid due attention to the subject, he would have foreseen the fatal consequences which such transactions cannot fail to produce, and he would at least have limited their extent.

The mischief became evident at the end of a few years. In 1780 M. Seguin, the Duke's treasurer, informed him that the annuities which had been created since his marriage amounted to 800,000 francs, a sum exactly equal to the whole of his revenue; that no more money could be borrowed, his credit being completely gone, in consequence of the way in which it had been abused; that, nevertheless, in the hope of finding persons who might be induced to lend, he had himself made advances from his own funds; that he had continued these advances as long as he was able, but that the amount being now 800,000 francs, it was impossible for him to do more; and that he was at last under the necessity of making known his painful situation, of informing his highness that he must discontinue his services, and of claiming payment of the sum due to him.

It may easily be conjectured how mortified the Duke de Chartres must have been on hearing that declaration. Heedless, fond of splendour, and generous to prodigality, he had never calculated, and now that he knew the truth

there was no time for calculation. He hastened to consult the most able men of business in Paris ; but no one could suggest the slightest relief. He then stood in the most dreadful situation in which a Prince can be placed, that of declaring himself—respect withholds me ; but it is impossible to mistake the word which was on the point of escaping from my pen.

Madame de Genlis, who was at this time the governess of the Princess and her brothers, advised him to consult M. Ducrest. Accustomed to do justice to the unbounded attachment to his family displayed by this lady, who, young, rich, and handsome, had retired from the world to educate his children, the Duke immediately followed her advice. It was, moreover, very natural for him to rely on the disinterestedness of the brother of a woman, who without remuneration scrupulously discharged that duty which is, of all others, the most laborious when executed as it was by her.

M. Ducrest justified the honourable confidence placed in him by pointing out a resource of a truly extraordinary nature, and which, perhaps, he alone could have discovered. He went to Madame de Montesson, at Rincy, where she was residing with her husband, the Duke d'Orleans, and informed her of the unfortunate situation of the Duke de Chartres, observing, that to assist in extricating him from his difficulties would greatly redound to her credit ; and that, to act so generous a part, would do her the more honour as it was well known she was aware how little goodwill her son-in-law bore her. In fine, he prevailed on her to urge the Duke d'Orleans to make a grant of the Palais Royal to his son.

With much difficulty the Duke's consent was ob-

tained. M. Ducrest had taken the precaution to bring with him M. Rouen, the Prince's notary, who had a conveyance ready drawn, so that as soon as the consent was obtained there was nothing to do but to sign it.

With this important deed in his possession the Marquis Ducrest returned to Paris, where he soon found capitalists ready to advance the funds necessary for making the projected improvement of the Palais Royal. He shut himself up for several weeks with M. Louis, the architect, to complete the plan and calculate the expense; their estimate came within 100,000 crowns of the actual outlay.<sup>1</sup> While the buildings were in progress, tenants came forward with offers to the extent of 1,200,000 francs. M. Ducrest wished to finish the fourth side, but the Prince, who was satisfied with getting out of his embarrassments, refused his consent, observing that he would consider of it afterwards. However, M. Ducrest, who wished to shew what his general project was, began what he was so desirous of proceeding with, and which is now in the course of completion on the same plan.

The Prince wished to reward M. Ducrest for succeeding so promptly in procuring him five millions of which he stood in need to meet the building expenses, and to make a reserve for himself of 1,500,000 francs that he might be enabled to wait until the speculation became productive; for having been the means of inducing the Duke d'Orleans to make a full and unqualified grant of the Palais Royal; for having obtained letters patent, authorising the alienation of a property which, according to the law then existing, was inalienable; and finally, for having procured the registration of the letters patent by

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<sup>1</sup> The expense amounted to 3,500,000 francs.

the Parliament, notwithstanding the opposition of the proprietors of the buildings on the old site, &c. M. Ducrest refused all the brilliant offers of the grateful prince. During five years he performed the duties of a zealous and devoted agent without any personal advantage to himself except the satisfaction he derived from proving his attachment from the Bourbon family, and pleasing a sister whom he loved.

The advantageous speculation of the Palais Royal excited numerous enemies against him; and he was long persecuted by those dark intrigues of which a man of unsuspecting integrity is often the victim, and by atrocious calumnies which he uniformly despised, but to which must be attributed part of the misfortunes he experienced during the long period of his emigration, and even after his return to France.

On the 24th of November, 1785, the Duke de Chartres, who had then succeeded his father the Duke d'Orleans, appointed M. Ducrest his chancellor; he thus discharged a sacred debt.

To serve the sovereign is a duty, but still it is allowable for the subject to solicit a recompense; but though attended by the certainty that no reward will be given, the service is not the less obligatory. It is not the same with respect to the relations which may subsist between an individual and a prince of the blood. The one owes to the other only that respectful homage of which the law of the state and the custom of society prescribe the forms; every other kind of attention is perfectly voluntary. It would, therefore, have been injustice in the Prince to have made no recompense, or even to have failed to proportion the reward to the service

performed. The late Duke of Orleans proved that he felt the force of this truth by the manner in which he acted towards M. Ducrest when, in 1787, he accepted his resignation of the chancellorship. Having to account only to the Prince, whose full confidence he possessed, receiving a salary of 100,000 francs, and occupying a superb hotel, his place was, unquestionably, one of the most desirable that could be obtained; but M. Ducrest no longer wished to retain it when he saw the Prince surrounded by perfidious counsellors who could not fail to lead him to his ruin, since they were capable of taking advantage of a discontent which was, perhaps, excused by the great injustice which had provoked it. The superior talents of MM. de Laclos and Syéyès were much to be dreaded when it was seen that they had gained an ascendancy over the Prince, whose want of firmness was doubtless his greatest fault. When he would not renounce so dangerous a connection, it became the duty of a faithful officer to quit a place which rendered him in some measure responsible for faults committed by his master. The Duke, however, did more than even could have been expected from his munificence; he recompensed his chancellor like a sovereign!<sup>1</sup>

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King had permitted but not recognized.<sup>1</sup> He informed her that she should still continue to receive the same sum, but under the denomination of a pension.

“Do you not consider it an honour, nephew, to be the relative of the late monseigneur ? ”

“Dear aunt,” replied M. Ducrest, “it is precisely to render myself worthy of that honour that I endeavour honestly to fulfil the duties of the office which his son has entrusted to me. I sincerely regret that I cannot oblige you ; my scruples are dictated by honour ; and to seek to overcome them would be to close your door against me ; for I would not incur the risk of entering upon so painful a discussion.”

This was the origin of Madame de Montesson’s coolness towards the family whom she disinherited. She always suspected that Madame de Genlis coincided with her brother in this refusal ; which, however, was not the fact. It was a conscientious scruple on the part of M. Ducrest who, at his death, was regretted by all parties. In France difference of opinion is forgotten in rendering justice to great services and honourable conduct.

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<sup>1</sup> He did not recognize it, as I have already observed, until a subsequent period.

## CHAPTER X

JOURNEY TO SWITZERLAND—ARRIVAL AT GENEVA—KIND  
RECEPTION BY M. DE BARANTE—MANNERS AND CUSTOMS  
OF THE GENEVESE—SUNDAY PARTIES—MADAME DE STAËL  
IN EXILE—COUNT DE SAINT-PRIEST AND HIS THREE  
DAUGHTERS—M. LE HOC, THE FRIEND OF THE DUKE DE  
BASSANO, FORMERLY AMBASSADOR AT GENEVA

My father's health being greatly deranged from the effect of the long and repeated vexations he had undergone, his physicians were of opinion that travelling would be of service to him, and recommended him to go to Switzerland. He made choice of the city of Geneva, on account of its fine climate; and as it had become a part of France, he could go thither without quitting his country. The rigours of exile had made him more than ever sensible of the happiness of remaining in his native land.

We experienced the kindest reception from the Prefect, M. de Barante, a well-informed man of unassuming and amiable manners, who was universally esteemed in a town in which a Frenchman was usually an object of dislike. The Genevese could not console themselves for having been forced to relinquish the independence of which they were so proud, and for the loss of the numbers of young men who every year became

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conscripts, guards of honour, or sub-lieutenants. Though subjects of the Empire, they still retained their Republican ideas and habits; they were conquered, but not subjugated; and but for the profound veneration in which the Prefect was held, it would I think have been difficult to restrain public dissatisfaction. Without ever resorting to violent measures, he strictly enforced the laws enacted by the Emperor, frequently modifying their severity by his conciliatory disposition. He never feared to compromise himself by receiving in his house individuals who he knew did not enjoy his sovereign's favour.<sup>1</sup>

Thanks to the kindness of M. de Barante and the friendship of the Boissier family, we obtained the most agreeable introductions on our arrival in Geneva. We were much pleased with the Genevese. Their customs, which differ very much from those of the French, have contributed to preserve that purity of manners which not even the Revolution had power to corrupt, and the reality of which every candid mind will readily admit.

For the space of three years I had the opportunity of closely observing the different ranks of society.

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<sup>1</sup> Thus he was on terms of intimate friendship with Madame de Staël and M. de Saint-Priest, formerly ambassador to Constantinople, who followed Louis XVIII. to Mittau. His gratitude to the Emperor Alexander induced him to remain in Russia with his three sons. Though old and infirm, he felt a great desire to see his daughters who had been educated in France, and he solicited permission to go to Montpellier; but after surmounting many obstacles, he could only obtain leave to go to Geneva with his sons. His daughters, who alternately spent some months with him, were all remarkable for beauty and exemplary conduct. The unfortunate brothers Faucher also found a protector in M. de Barante, who has always befriended the distressed. His amiable family have inherited his virtues and talents.

Availing myself of the privilege of a foreigner, instead of confining myself to one particular class I mingled with all whom I found agreeable, without troubling myself about the distinctions laid down by the inhabitants of the town. In spite of their Liberalism, the Genevese have an unusual share of pride. The ancient patrician families, who are nobles, are no less jealous of their ranks than our French dukes and peers. One cannot live in the *lower part* of the town (which by the bye is far the most agreeable quarter) without incurring the contempt of those who reside in the *upper part*. The streets in the neighbourhood of the lake are occupied by shop-keepers, while public functionaries, bankers, and persons of fortune throng to streets to which there is no access except by a steep ascent.

On our arrival my mother hired a very pleasant lodging in an airy situation (the Place du Molard) and our windows commanded a delightful prospect. Pleased with the arrangements she had made, my mother described to a lady of her acquaintance the advantage of her lodgings, and mentioned the reasonable rent at which she had procured them; but she was astonished to find that her friend listened to her with marked coolness :

"Was I not right to close the bargain immediately?" enquired my mother.

"No, I think not," replied the lady.

"Why? I am sure we shall be exceedingly comfortable."

"Very likely."

"The air is delicious, purified by the Rhone, which flows almost beneath our windows."

"Very true."

"The view of the lake is enchanting."

"So it is; but yet you cannot possibly live there."

"I cannot guess your objection."

"Why, the fact is, nobody would visit you; it is the *lower part* of the town, which is occupied by the shopkeepers. You must live in a more genteel situation."

Everybody to whom we mentioned the subject was of the same opinion; and we were accordingly obliged to give up our pleasant lodgings and look out for others.

After some trouble we at length succeeded in procuring apartments in a little dirty narrow street. Only a slight wall separated the house from the common jail. But our friend rejoiced to see us installed in this disagreeable abode, for she began to fear that we should not obtain lodgings in the *fine quarter* of the town.

The rooms communicated with each other by little steps, which owing to the scanty supply of light that was admitted to them were so very dangerous that we every moment ran the risk of breaking our necks. The paper on the walls was of a large flowered pattern in very bad taste, and moreover none of the cleanest. However, we had no choice, as there were no other *good* lodgings to be had.

My mother was much annoyed at being compelled to make this sacrifice to gentility. By way of consolation her friends informed her that she was in possession of the room which once belonged to Calvin.<sup>1</sup>

"What an odious drawing-room!" said my mother.

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<sup>1</sup> This was the fact; and from the dilapidated condition of the room there appeared reason to conclude that it had not been repaired since Calvin's time.

"Never mind that. Your bed-chamber was once occupied by a celebrated man."

"But it is so exceedingly dark."

"He had light enough to write all his books in it."

"But this proximity to the jail is insupportable. The noise of the unfortunate prisoners, the barking of dogs, and the oaths of the jailors disturb my rest."

"Pooh, nonsense! Calvin slept soundly enough here."

It was useless to complain, and in spite of every inconvenience we were forced to be satisfied with our *genteel lodgings*.

The distinction of classes is carried to such a length that young ladies who are always accustomed to walk out alone, take a waiting-woman with them when they go into the lower part of the town to make purchases. Yet the inhabitants of that despised quarter are remarkable for good conduct and respectability.

We issued invitations for a little party on Sunday evening, and to our surprise we received apologies from all the Genevese ladies, who returned for answer that they were previously engaged. My mother mentioned this to Madame de Staël, who informed her that nobody thought of inviting any but foreign ladies on a Sunday, a day on which the Genevese ladies had parties among themselves, which nothing but illness exempted them from attending.

These parties are formed in the following manner: it is agreed that a dozen little girls of about four or five years of age shall meet and spend the evening together every Sunday. They admit no strangers, not even their sisters, who have separate parties attended by girls of

their own age. When one of the society marries, she is chosen as chaperon to all the rest ; young men are then invited, and this is called *opening the society*.

All noisy amusements are banished from these parties ; card-tables are laid out in the drawing-rooms, and the company sit down to whist. At half-past ten, tea and meringues are handed about (the latter are indispensable to the epicures of Geneva), and at eleven the party breaks up.

Sometimes, but very rarely, balls are given. No instance of indecorum is ever known to occur at these meetings, where a number of young females are under the guardianship of one of their own age. The man who should suffer an indecorous expression to escape him in such a company would be immediately banished from Genevese society.

These Sunday parties take place every week regularly, except when interrupted by the death of one of the friends ; the rest then wear mourning for three months, and their meetings are suspended.

There is something exceedingly interesting in friendships formed thus in early life, and they must be a lasting source of happiness to those by whom they are contracted ; they grow old together, and in advanced life they enjoy the pleasure of finding themselves surrounded at least once a week by persons whose tastes and recollections coincide with their own. They may talk over the pleasures of their youth without exposing themselves to the ridicule of the young and thoughtless. The women hear praises of their former beauty in spite of the wrinkles which the hand of Time has imprinted on them, and the men are complimented on that elegance and

gallantry which have become only things of recollection. In short, the friends thus assembled together are happy in the indulgence of that self-love which is so often chilled when we compare what we are with what we have been. The good old grandmother, while gratified by the compliments bestowed on her favourite granddaughter, looks back with self-complacency on the admiration which she herself excited, and the recollections of her own youth render her indulgent to the youth of others.<sup>1</sup>

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1 M. Raoul Rochette, in his "Letters on Switzerland," treats Geneva and its inhabitants very severely. He dwells on their faults and says little of their merits, which, in my opinion, predominate infinitely. The same author has, however, published an account of a second visit to Geneva, in which I understand he retracts his former unjust opinions with that candour with which a sensible man always acknowledges an error. The respectful attention with which he was treated by all classes of people must, at least, have convinced him that talent is duly appreciated in Geneva. His introduction to several Genevese distinguished for information and intelligence, and his acquaintance with Mdlles. Necker and Boissier, helped him to form opinions more conformable with truth; and he now speaks of the talent of Mdlles. Naville, Pictet and Boissier as all do who have the happiness to know them. The authoress of the *Mémoires d'une Contemporaine* has also pronounced a very unfavourable opinion on the ladies of Geneva. Fortunately, she confesses that she passed only *eight days* among them. Their education is superior to that which generally falls to the lot of their sex, and they are fond of cultivating the sciences and fine arts. That which to us may have the appearance of pedantry is with them merely the natural consequences of an education which elevates them above all frivolity. If the *Contemporaine* could have formed an intimacy with families as easily and speedily as she travelled through Europe, she would, I am convinced, have shared my admiration for the exemplary mothers, wives, and daughters of Geneva. She would have confessed that in no country can be found women more distinguished for talent and virtue. I spent three happy years in Geneva, where I experienced nothing but kindness. There, too, I contracted an ardent friendship for a lady who is now

M. le Hoc arrived shortly before we did. He was delighted with Geneva and its inhabitants, upon which he wrote some elegant verses, which I shall transcribe. They are the unpublished effusions of an author who obtained great success at the Théâtre Français. His tragedy of *Pyrrhus*, which afforded a fine opportunity for the display of Talma's acting, was received with distinguished approbation. The subject presented allusions displeasing to the Emperor, and the performance was prohibited. An usurper on being advised to surrender a throne which his victories enabled him to ascend, could not be permitted to say,—

"Je pourrais en tomber, je n'en veux pas descendre."

Talma made several attempts to revive this piece, but without success. M. le Hoc was appointed ambassador to Sweden after his return from Greece, whither he accompanied the Count de Choiseuil in quality of secretary.<sup>1</sup> I know not for what reason he was recalled, and left unprovided for. His intimate friend, the Duke de Bassano, vainly endeavoured to get him attached to another embassy. Napoleon refused his consent, and would not even allow him the retiring pension to which he was entitled. He died without experiencing any fortunate change in his circumstances.

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no more. These circumstances make me always anxious to render justice to Geneva and its inhabitants; for this it is only necessary to describe what I saw. Gratitude must be my apology for dwelling so long on this subject.

1 The Abbé Delille also went on this journey to Greece.

## CHAPTER XI

### PORTRAITS OF MADAME DE GENLIS AND MADAME DE STAËL

BEING on terms of intimacy with Madame de Staël, we had opportunities of appreciating the excellence of her heart, and admiring that brilliant genius which has elevated her to the rank of our most celebrated writers in prose. I am convinced that it is impossible to institute a comparison between Madame de Genlis's talent and hers, as the endowments as well as the character of these two eminent women are completely different. In general conversation, Madame de Staël seemed to wish to dazzle rather than to please, and nothing was easier than for her to do so, as she discussed all subjects with uncommon sagacity. She delivered her opinions in a kind of extempore orations to the circle that surrounded her; and to listen was always with her an indispensable requisite. If, while talking, she accidentally put a question, it was introduced in so indeterminate a manner that no one felt called upon to reply, it being certain that the answer would not be heard. Fascinated by her eloquence, her auditors were often induced to adopt her opinions; for while she spoke it was difficult not to think with her. Absence and reflection were necessary to enable them to perceive that she had been maintaining

opinions contrary to those which they entertained. Her impressions were variable; objects successively appeared to her under different points of view; and hence opinions which an impartial sincerity dictated appeared sometimes contradictory. It might have been supposed she wished to shew that by her mental ingenuity she could sustain the *pro* and the *con* of every question.

She was forty-five when I first knew her. She still preserved all the tastes of youth, and displayed all that coquetry of the toilet which was rather to be expected in a young woman than in one of her age. She certainly never was handsome; her mouth and nose were decidedly ugly; but her superb eyes wonderfully expressed the passing thoughts of a mind like hers, rich in elevated and energetic ideas. Her hands were perfectly well formed, and she took care on all occasions to display them by constantly twirling between her fingers a twig of poplar with two or three leaves upon it, which, as she turned it round, caused a gentle rustling that pleased her. This she affected to regard as the obligato accompaniment of her words, and she pretended that she would become dumb were she to be deprived of the dear twig, for which little pieces of rolled paper were substituted in winter. When she went to a party she was always offered several of these playthings, and she selected one which appeared likely to serve her during the whole of the evening.

She was kind, obliging, and incapable of taking vengeance for the offences of which she had to complain. She loved those who differed in opinion from her, and argued with sincerity and force. Certain that she would always shine in an intellectual combat, those who some-

times contradicted her were sure to please her; a singular way of gaining favour with a lady! In general, Madame de Staël had little intercourse with the Genevese, whose severe manners and occasional austerity ill assimilated with talents and a character, the independence of which was not reconcilable with their usual ideas of the nature of female destiny and duties. Her cousin, Madame Necker, and Madame Rilliet-Huber, both celebrated for their wit, were her only intimate companions; but foreign ladies were always proud to visit her, and witness the superiority their sex was capable of obtaining.

She loved company in which she shone, but did not much care for the society of women who were seldom qualified to interest her by their intellectual resources. The factitious manners and conventional phrases of drawing-room parties she mortally disliked. She would not admit that truth and morality might be recognized under an exterior of affectation; she could not endure the contracted and hypocritical application given in society to the words "respectable" and "decorous," and would have erased the corresponding term, *les convenances*, from her dictionary. Madame de Staël was never happy except when in the company of men capable of appreciating her talents, and of discussing subjects contrary to the general habits of women. The more extensive the circle, the more was her genius roused. Celebrity was necessary to her existence; and she knew how to obtain it by a different path from that pursued by the rival whom it was the fashion to oppose to her.

Madame de Genlis, far from wishing to display her extensive knowledge, always studies to place herself on a level with those with whom she converses; and never

shews that the talent she possesses is greater than theirs. She discovers with extraordinary promptitude the subjects with which a visitor is best acquainted, and leads the conversation in a direction which interests and gives confidence to a stranger admitted for the first time to an interview with a woman whose reputation is known throughout Europe. I have heard her say that there is always something to be learned even from men of the most limited information, because there is always at least some one point with which they are well acquainted, and that the only difficulty is to discover it and bring them to talk upon it. The word *amiable* seems to have been formed to describe the conversation of Madame de Genlis. Endowed with an extraordinary memory, she has read thousands of volumes of which she has forgotten nothing, and her citations are always correct. The great world, and the Court in which she lived, have supplied her with a multitude of anecdotes, which she relates better than any other person, and without the slightest pretension. In her works she is severe, rigid, and intolerant on every topic relating to religion. In society she is moderate and indulgent; never prying into the actions of others; she asks no questions about their conduct, and is often ready to excuse what many blame with bitterness. She is not easily prevailed upon to adopt an ill opinion of anyone, and on this account I have often seen her form an intimacy with persons who did not deserve the honour of her acquaintance. It required very convincing proofs to make her put faith in reports injurious to the character of others, for none knew better than she to what unjust lengths calumny may be carried. Having constantly written in favour of

that religion which she practised, she considered herself bound in conscience to attack with firmness in her writings everything tending to subvert it; but since she has laid aside her pen she supports her opinion only with that gentleness which becomes our sex. Her enemies persist in repeating that "she has turned devotee"; this is an absurdity which ought to be contradicted, for it is so often reproduced that, besides its falsehood, it has the fault of being monotonous. Madame de Genlis, beautiful as an angel, abounding in wit, talent, and elegance, inheriting a considerable fortune, and enjoying an agreeable situation under Her Highness the Duchess de Chartres, who loaded her with acts of kindness, retired at the age of thirty-one into the Convent of Belle-Chasse, to educate Her Highness's children, her own, and her nephew. She superintended every part of their instruction, and only very rarely left the convent to visit her family, or to conduct her pupils to representations of our dramatic masterpieces. In this retreat, where she saw little company, she completed the acquisition of that solid information which distinguishes her, and traced the plan of several works, which she afterwards published, and of the profits of which she made so noble a use by supporting Mdlle. d'Orleans while in emigration more than eighteen months.

The Emperor was able to judge of merit, and he wished to maintain a close correspondence with Madame de Genlis on subjects chosen by herself. On her applications he made several grants in favour of artists and literary men, who were languishing in a state of poverty, which was a reproach to the Government. She several times gave advice which was followed, and certainly a

bigot was not likely to become such a favourite with a man of Napoleon's stamp.

Madame de Genlis never refused to perform a service.<sup>1</sup> Her first work was sold to procure the liberty of some interesting prisoners; she has since repeatedly devoted her works to purposes of beneficence. Her "Life of Madame de Bonchamp,"<sup>2</sup> was written only on condition

1 This amiable character renders inexplicable the bitterness with which she is attacked in the journals and pamphlets of the day, and even in some works destined to survive temporary circumstances, in consequence of the details of our modern history which they contain. Is it not astonishing, for example, that M. Toulotte, a man of merit and an upright judge, should shut himself up for several months in his closet to criticise bitterly all the works of Madame de Genlis? If they be so bad, why take so much pains to refute them? Oblivion would do better justice to their worthlessness than two large volumes tending to prove that they have no merit. M. Toulotte should have avoided calling attention to things so unworthy, and he would not then have to reproach himself with having so unseasonably attacked a writer whose age of eighty and whose sex ought to have induced him to treat her with more indulgence. The friends of Madame de Genlis may regret this animosity, which would, perhaps, cease were it known that she who is its object never receives any of the blows aimed at her, for she no longer reads newspapers, and whenever she meets with her name in a book she shuts it. She will, therefore, close her long career without becoming acquainted with all the efforts of envy to tarnish her reputation. She will, perhaps, persist in regarding the great interest she has excited as a proof of success, while M. Toulotte will see in that circumstance only the decay of taste. M. Toulotte asserts that the name of Madame de Genlis, up to the period of her marriage, was Saint-Aubin. This is a mistake. She became a canoness at the age of four, was constantly called the Countess de Laney, and never changed that title till she married the Count de Genlis, not secretly as M. Toulotte affirms, for the union was made public as soon as it took place.

2 I have seen Madame de Bonchamp, who was so celebrated for her admirable conduct during the war of La Vendée. She is a little dark woman, and never could have possessed beauty, for the absence of which, however, the piquant expression of her countenance makes ample amends. On my first introduction to her I felt all that

that the profits of the publication should be distributed among poor Vendéan families.

She may, perhaps, be accused of the weakness of suffering herself to be too easily prepossessed and influenced by persons towards whom she afterwards became indifferent. But what picture has not its dark side! The shades in Madame de Genlis's character are so slight that they would never be noticed, but that the world is sure to see a fault in everything great and good.

I may conclude by repeating the opinion I have already expressed, which is that no comparison can be

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enthusiastic admiration which her character can never fail to inspire. She followed her husband through every danger, and remained concealed in the trunk of a tree with her children ill of the small-pox. One died of the disease, and the unfortunate mother held the corpse in her arms for thirty-six hours. These incidents, which were related to me by a stranger, affected me deeply. I was all impatience to hear them from the mouth of the heroine; but I must confess that my interest was chilled whenever she began to speak. She narrated her campaigns with all the energy of an old soldier who loves to refer to the battles in which he has distinguished himself. She betrayed an extravagant feeling of satisfaction in alluding to the number of sabre blows that were dealt among the Blues. In short, she appeared to me infinitely too masculine. How differently has Madame de la Roche-Jaquelain painted her misfortunes! The terrors she felt in exposing herself to the most frightful dangers to save her husband are as natural as they are affecting, and give additional interest to her situation. I heard Madame de Bonchamp relate that being in a party of Vendéan ladies, where the heat was exceedingly oppressive, one of them requested the loan of her fan, as she had forgotten her own. "I always carry mine about with me," said Madame de Bonchamp. "Here it is, at your service." With these words she drew from her pocket a pistol, which she presented to the lady, who was so alarmed that she almost sank to the ground. The Emperor, on learning that Madame de Bonchamp had been left without fortune, granted her a pension of 6,000 francs, and promised to get her daughter settled. The young lady afterwards married Count Arthur de Bouillé.

drawn between Mesdames de Staël and de Genlis. The writings of the former bear the impress of masculine energy and philosophy, while those of the latter are characterized by feminine grace and sensibility. Madame de Staël was fond of company and the world, where she enjoyed the admiration due to her transcendent talent; Madame de Genlis, on the contrary, has lived in solitude, and devoted herself to the pleasures of country life. The former possessed no agreeable accomplishment, and despised all those graces in which the latter so pre-eminently excels. We should, therefore, be content to admire the talent, and enjoy the productions of these two celebrated women without attempting to draw a parallel which forces us to search for faults in either.

## CHAPTER XII

MADAME DE STAËL AT COPET—HER SOCIETY—AMATEUR ACTING OF MM. DE SABRAN, BENJAMIN CONSTANT, SISMONDI, AND LABÉDOYÈRE—M. CATRUFO AND THE ALCHEMIST—M. DE BARANTE SUPERSEDED IN THE PREFECTURE OF GENEVA BY THE BARON CAPELLE—PORTRAITS OF THE PRINCIPAL PUBLIC FUNCTIONARIES OF GENEVA

MADAME DE STAËL's affectionate attachment to her father, and her pious veneration for his memory, are generally known. She had his remains embalmed in spirits of wine, and buried beside those of Madame Necker, at Copet.<sup>1</sup> The place of interment is surrounded by high walls, and the key of the door was kept by Madame de Staël, who permitted none but her children to accompany her when she visited the sacred spot.

A droll story used to be told at Geneva about M. de Bonstetten, the grand bailli of the Pays de Vaud, and a man of talent and information. He had repeatedly and earnestly entreated that Madame de Staël would permit him to visit the tomb of her father. Continued refusals

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<sup>1</sup> It has been asserted that the bodies are seen floating in marble coffins resembling antique baths; but this is untrue. A monument is erected above them.

served only to excite his curiosity, which at length became so uncontrollable that he resolved to gratify it by stealth. He accordingly procured a ladder, which with some difficulty he conveyed to the tomb, to reach which it was necessary to pass through the kitchen garden. He placed the ladder against the wall and ascended in safety to the top; but he had now to descend, and for this purpose it was necessary to move the ladder to the inner side of the wall. But in M. de Bonstetten's attempt to execute this difficult operation, the ladder slipped from his grasp, and fell to the ground, leaving the unfortunate bailli perched on the top of the wall, with no alternative but to wait patiently till chance should bring someone to his deliverance. It was useless to call for assistance, the château was so distant that he could have no hope of being heard. He was tormented by the thought that the discovery of his enterprise would give offence to Madame de Staël; and to complete his vexation, he heard the ringing of the dinner-bell, whose summons he was wont to obey with the strictest punctuality. He could scarcely venture to move in his dangerous situation. As for jumping down, that was impossible, for as I have already observed, the wall was very high, and poor M. de Bonstetten was exceedingly fat. A second peal of the dinner-bell rent his very heart. At length, after two hours of insufferable torment, Auguste de Staël, alarmed at his mysterious absence at an hour when he was always sure to be seen, went out in quest of him, and to his astonishment discovered him in the situation I have described, half dead with alarm and vexation.

The adventure was, I believe, concealed from the

knowledge of Madame de Staël, and the excuse of indisposition served to account for M. de Bonstetten's extraordinary want of punctuality. He probably made no other attempt to gratify his indiscreet curiosity.

Madame de Staël could not make herself happy in her exile: she did not like Geneva, and she used often to say that she would rather have a hundred louis per annum in the Rue Jean-Pain-Molet, in Paris, than a hundred thousand livres at Copet. She certainly did nothing that was likely to lead to her recall. She lodged in a furnished hotel, and was served by the waiters, before whom she used to express in the most unequivocal manner her disapproval of the Government, that is to say, the Emperor. In vain did her friends assure her that spies were set to watch her, and that every word she uttered was reported to the Tuileries. She went on condemning everything that was done, and laughing at the fear with which she inspired *Robespierre on horseback*. To divert the *ennui* that oppressed her, she had plays performed in her theatre at Copet. I was present at several of these representations, which I must confess I thought very indifferent.

Mesdames de Staël and Récamier performed in *Andromaque*. The latter, who personated the widow, was so exquisitely beautiful that little was thought about her acting. Madame de Staël's appeared to me too extravagant: she declaimed and gesticulated far too much. The other characters were sustained by MM. de Sabran, Benjamin Constant, Labédoyère (whose future prospects were then so promising), and M. Sismondi, who with the Genevese accent, which he retained in full purity, frightfully tortured the fine verses of Racine. On this

occasion, M. Schlegel filled the office of prompter. I was present too, at the performance of *Gustavus Vasa*, which was nothing else than the play of *Edouard en Ecosse*, with the names of the characters altered; the piece having been prohibited by Napoleon's apprehensive police. I also remember seeing a play which was written by Madame de Staël, and in which M. Benjamin Constant performed the part of the prophet Elijah; he had then such an impediment in his delivery that it was painful to hear him, and no one would have believed that he was destined to be one of our most distinguished orators.

To attend these dramatic performances it was necessary to set out from Geneva at noon, so as to get to Copet at an early hour. Having taken their seats in the theatre, which was very small, the company began to eat bread and chocolate, which they brought with them as refreshments, and at midnight they returned home, harassed with fatigue and half famished. However, on the very next opportunity, they did not hesitate to subject themselves to a repetition of the same inconveniences, for the honour of being included among the chosen few who were admitted to these solemnities, to which twice as many persons were invited as the theatre could accommodate. The fashion of going to hear good poetry badly delivered became a downright mania. Though I was like everyone else eager to witness these performances, yet I was nevertheless sorry to see Madame de Staël expose herself to criticism which was not always of the most gracious description.

She patronised an Italian named Catrufo, who was established at Geneva as a professor of singing. He

afterwards visited Paris, where he composed *Félicie*, a production which obtained considerable success. Finding himself capable of producing an opera, he requested M. de Sabran to furnish him with a text. M. de Sabran, with his usual obliging disposition, set to work, and very soon produced *L'Amant Alchimiste*, an opera in three acts, intended for representation at the theatre of Geneva. Not attaching the least importance to the work, he candidly told Catrufo that it was worth nothing; but that with the help of agreeable music it might pass off as many other things did, and that it was written only to afford the composer an opportunity of bringing himself into notice.

It got reported through the town that M. de Sabran had said, "Anything is good enough for the Genevese." Only those who were unacquainted with the good sense and amiable manners of M. de Sabran could have supposed him capable of such an observation, which was the more absurd, inasmuch as the inhabitants of Geneva are exceedingly well informed; a fact of which no one was more competent to judge than M. de Sabran. Nevertheless, the report gained credit. The condemnation of the opera was determined on, and on the evening preceding its representation the author and composer received intimation of its doom. They resigned themselves to the fate which they had no power to avert. In the morning M. de Sabran purchased a number of whistles, which he distributed among his friends with the request that they would oblige him by taking part in the concert which was to supersede the opera. The theatre was crowded to excess, and as soon as Madame de Staël entered her box a confused murmur announced the

impending storm. The piece, whatever might have been its merit, must have fallen, for everything concurred to favour the cabal that was formed against it. The scene opened with a trio by the alchemist, his servant, and his niece, each armed with a pair of bellows, and lustily vociferating, "*Soufflons, soufflez*," ("Blow, let us blow"). Of course, nothing could be easier than to convert this chorus into "*Siffions, sifflez*," ("Hiss, let us hiss"). The audience immediately seized the joke, and the uproar never ceased till the curtain dropped. During this scene of tumult M. de Sabran indited the following epigram:—

"A l'alchimiste épargnez les sifflets,  
Plaiguez plutôt sa malencontre extrême,  
Car cet ouvrage est si plat, si mauvais,  
Que l'auteur est forcé de le siffler lui-même."

M. de Sabran, who is the well-known author of some pretty fables, is subject to singular fits of abstraction. To the following I was myself a witness:

When at Copet he was accustomed to walk out every day after dinner. On one occasion, when he was unusually late in returning home, Madame de Staël began to fear that something had happened to him. At length we saw him enter in the most singular plight imaginable: his hair was hanging down in complete disorder, and his legs wet up to his knees.

"Where have you been?" enquired Madame de Staël.

"I have been walking, madam."

"But you are dreadfully wet; you must have fallen into the water."

"No, it is nothing but the dew. I have never been out of the great walk near the mill."

"Oh! then you have certainly walked into the water, for the course of the stream has been turned, and it now runs right across that walk."

M. de Sabran was the first to laugh at his unfortunate blunder, on which he made a thousand droll remarks. With M. de Sabran's solid good qualities, he can well afford to plead guilty to a little failing, of which, however, he could never be accused when he had to serve a friend, or to perform a duty to the excellent mother whom he has recently lost.<sup>1</sup>

At Copet I was first introduced to M. Prosper de Barante,<sup>2</sup> who was then very young. He was at that time, I believe, only known as the author of *Tableau de la Littérature Française*. He had just completed the interesting "Memoirs of the Marchioness de la Roche-Jaquelain," which were not then published. I was fortunate enough to hear some chapters of the work read, and they appeared to me, as they have since appeared to everyone, charmingly written, and full of interesting and curious facts. That which to me gives them a peculiar charm is the extreme simplicity with which the heroine relates all that she did, guided by the dictates of her own heart, which enabled her to surmount the fears natural to her sex and her timid character. This natural timidity enhances our admira-

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<sup>1</sup> Madame de Sabran's second husband was the celebrated Chevalier de Bouffiers, whose existence she cheered by her graces and talents, her devoted affection, and that inalterable sweetness of temper which she seems to have bequeathed to her son.

<sup>2</sup> Now a peer of France, and a member of the French Academy. For the first of these titles he is indebted to the esteem due to his honourable character and his administrative talents. The second is the just reward of his extensive and valuable literary labours.

tion of the resolution with which she faced danger, and tremblingly exposed herself to almost certain death. This is the sort of heroism which becomes a woman, and not that of a Grenadier. The Amazon braves the cannon's mouth because she feels no terror; nature ought to have created her man.

M. de Barante has ingeniously imparted to his narrative a charming air of natural and feminine grace, without sacrificing the energy requisite in several of the descriptions. Since this production he has acquired strong claims to the admiration of the literary world; but I must be pardoned for preferring to all his other works that to which I have just referred, and which in a powerful degree excited my interest.

His conversation sufficiently indicated the intelligence which was one day destined to distinguish him. When in company he spoke little and listened attentively, and seemed to be maturing that talent which is now so amply developed. Madame de Staël entertained a warm friendship for him, and used often to say that he would acquire a reputation, which he was himself far from thinking about.

This prophecy has been fulfilled. But Madame de Staël, however much she might be gratified by this confirmation of her opinion, was cruelly vexed at the dismissal of M. de Barante, senior, from the situation of Prefect of Geneva. The *Moniteur* informed him that Baron Capelle was to become his successor. The Baron was at first very unpopular among the Genevese, who regretted the loss of M. de Barante, and a thousand stories were circulated respecting the new Prefect. One of the best accredited was that he had been a strolling

actor before his acquaintance with the Princess Eliza, who was the origin of his good fortune.

It is said that a company of French players, who paid a visit to Geneva, could not obtain permission to perform there because the mayor, a very serious personage, refused to sanction anything that was at variance with the austere manners of his countrymen. The fine gentleman of the company, more persevering than the manager, who had contentedly packed up all his theatrical paraphernalia, determined to have an interview with the Prefect, and for that purpose repaired to his house. The Prefect, hearing a noise in his ante-chamber, came out to enquire the cause of it. What was his astonishment, on seeing a stranger rush forward to embrace him, exclaiming with extreme volubility,—

“ Oh, my old comrade, I am overjoyed to meet you here ! You have come out of the Prefect’s cabinet, therefore I presume you know him. Do, I entreat you, use your influence to induce him to let us have a few performances. The arts, you know, must be protected. Oh, you seem to forget ; but your old friends do not. Heaven inspired me with the determination to come here and implore the Prefect ; but you will do us this kind office, my good fellow, will you not ? ”

All the clerks of the Prefecture witnessed this strange scene, and the embarrassment of the poor Prefect may be easily imagined. The company of players, however, obtained leave to stay some time in the town.

Whether this anecdote be true or false, I cannot pretend to say. It was transmitted to me from Geneva, where M. de Capelle was ultimately very well liked, though far from being honoured and respected like M. de Barante.

Having mentioned the public authorities of Geneva, I cannot refrain from saying a few words respecting General Duspuch, the Commandant of the garrison, who never used to join any parties on the lake because he said he was as much afraid of water as of fire.

His personal appearance perfectly coincided with his pompous and formal manners. He discharged the duties of his post with the most absurd punctilio, never suffering any ceremony, however superfluous, to be neglected; for instance, he used regularly to close the gates of the town, though all the surrounding country was occupied by our triumphant armies. His costume was as preposterous as that of an old military commandant in a farce; his hair was powdered and frizzed in the fashion styled *à l'oiseau royal*, and he was constantly armed with an inoffensive sword and an enormous gold-headed cane. He was, however, a very worthy man, and exceedingly good-natured if not impeded in the execution of his military prerogatives, which his dignified spouse respected no less than he did. The poor General was a perfect blank in intellect. The following little anecdotes will shew that Napoleon formed a fair estimate of his value when he dismissed him on a pension. It was, I believe, continued till the Restoration.

The city of Geneva is built on very unequal ground. Someone seeing the General slowly ascending the principal street, which is exceedingly steep, observed that he was right not to hurry, lest he should slip.

"Yes, yes, I follow the principle laid down in the Gospel," replied he, quoting the Italian proverb, "*Chi va piano va sano.*"

An attractive piece was produced at the theatre of

Geneva, under the title of *Le Tyran Domestique*. The general took his family to see it, and, at the conclusion of the performance, being asked how he liked it, he observed:

“I think the piece is very good, but it has a very silly title; for the *domestique* (the servant), instead of being a tyrant, is the best fellow in the world, and it is a shame that he should be so misrepresented in the play-bills.”

This curious blunder respecting the title of the piece shewed how much the poor general understood of the plot!

## CHAPTER XIII

M. EYNARD OF GENEVA—THE GREEKS DEMETRIUS AND CARIANTHÈS DANCE THE PYRRHICA AT MADAME DE STAËL'S—M. ROCCA MEETS MADAME DE STAËL AT A BALL GIVEN BY M. HOTTINGER—M. ROCCA, THE ELDER—HIS ORIGIN—M. HUBER, NEPHEW OF THE FRIEND OF VOLTAIRE—TOUCHING TRAIT OF A YOUNG GENEVESE AND HER BLIND LOVER—MM. TOPPFER AND DE LA RIVE, LANDSCAPE PAINTERS—MM. MASSOT AND ARLAUD, PORTRAIT PAINTERS—GENEVESE MANNERS

I MET M. Eynard at Geneva. He came from Florence, where he had played the brilliant but dangerous part of the sovereign's favourite. His countenance was then agreeable, though he was harassed by fatigue. His talents were advantageously spoken of, but the celebrity he has since obtained throughout Europe was far from being anticipated. He owes it to his zealous support of the cause of the Greeks, whose courageous struggle for the recovery of their independence buries individual degradation in oblivion. Looked at in mass they are heroes, and it is pleasing to have to view with admiration a nation which has bequeathed us so many brilliant recollections.

There were at Geneva two Greeks, who frequently visited Madame de Staël. In me their names excited an

emotion which was ridiculed, but which I could not repress. One was named Demetrius, the other Carianthès. They were ugly, but there was an expression in their eyes which I never observed in other men; one might read in their looks a presage of the restoration of their country. They danced the *pyrrhica*, and Mdlle. de Staël<sup>1</sup> and I learned it. I certainly cannot call myself brave, but when holding these Greeks by the hands, and performing the movements of this dance, the air of which is very martial, I thought myself capable of the greatest acts of courage. Perhaps a single flash of a pistol would have restored me to myself again; but for the time I assuredly had a fit of real courage.

Poor Carianthès died in a hospital! He was attached to a Russian (M. de Balk) who constantly travelled; tired with carrying about a sick man, he had the cruelty to send him to the nearest hospital, where his sufferings were soon ended. Demetrius returned to Greece, where, perhaps, more fortunate than his companion, he has perished gloriously, defending his country against his oppressors.

I believe it was about this period, in 1808, that Madame de Staël first saw M. Rocca, whom she afterwards married. M. Hottinger, a rich banker, gave a grand ball in celebration of the marriage of his friend, M. James Portales, who had just espoused Mdlle. de Falconnet.

M. Rocca, who was a native of Geneva, came on

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<sup>1</sup> She afterwards married the Duke de Broglie. Beauty, wit, extensive information, sweetness of disposition, and perfectly amiable conduct, render her an example for the women of her age.

his way to the Peninsula, there to visit his family. He appeared at the ball in a Hussar uniform, and took his departure next morning for Spain. I was dancing with him when Madame de Staël entered, followed, as was usual, by a numerous train. She was in a rich dress, but it did not make her appear to advantage.

"Is that a far-famed woman?" said M. Rocca to me. "She is very ugly, and I detest such a straining for effect."—"She is so accustomed to receive the homage of all that she is entitled to praise for being so condescending and indulgent."—"Oh! all that you can say of her good qualities will never persuade me that she does right in coming here at the head of a whole brigade; and, assuredly, I shall never make one in the troop of slaves she drags after her. Like the victors in the ancient triumphs, she wishes to count her prisoners; I shall not swell the number."

Madame de Staël was struck with M. Rocca's fine countenance, which was more embellished than disfigured by a large scar. Though young, he wore the decoration of the legion of honour. After a while, finding that M. Rocca paid no attention to her, she took umbrage at his neglect, and observed that the man was very well, but that his self-sufficient air was quite offensive to her. However, the indifference thus shewn for her, to which she was not accustomed, was, perhaps, precisely the cause of the favours she afterwards lavished on a man destined to become so dear to her as to make her change a name which she had rendered illustrious.

Some years after, M. Rocca returned to Geneva covered with wounds. His sufferings were a new motive

of interest, and he was fortunate enough to obtain a full return of the love which he conceived for this extraordinary woman. He found opportunities for giving her proofs of his affection, and finally had the happiness to induce her to espouse him. He could not survive her loss; and died a few months after her.

M. Rocca's father was not a man of such sensibility as his son; at the death of his wife he accompanied the funeral on foot, as is the custom at Geneva, to the cemetery outside the walls of the city. A friend, who met him on his return from this melancholy duty, put on a long face, as usual on such occasions, and asked after his health in the most sorrowful tone imaginable.

"Why, thank you, pretty hearty," replied M. Rocca; "that little walk has quite set me up. There is nothing like a little fresh air in the country."

Next day was Sunday; M. Rocca went, in deep mourning, to the house of a lady who used to see company on that day. He knocked; a female servant opened, and stared with astonishment at the unexpected visitor. Marvelling at seeing no lights in the hall, M. Rocca asked the maid whether her lady was indisposed.

"No, sir, but Madame has no party to-night."

"Indeed, why not?"

"It is, sir, because——"

"Well, because what?"

"Because Madame Rocca is dead, and as my mistress was her friend——"

"Ah! that's very true. But how shall I spend my evening? You may tell your mistress I think her wonderfully silly."

And away he went, grumbling at the absurdity of such customs.

It will with difficulty be believed that during a residence of three years at Geneva I never went to Switzerland. I was extremely desirous of visiting that country, but as I was not married I could not travel alone. My parents disliked frequent moving about, and our excursions were confined to Copet, some places in the neighbourhood of Geneva and Ferney, of which I shall give an account in the next chapter.

We frequently visited an interesting and remarkable man, M. Huber, nephew of the friend of Voltaire. He had been blind since the age of seventeen. At that period he fell in love with a rich young lady, who returned his affection ; but their parents opposed their union, and they were separated. A few months afterwards he was afflicted with gutta serenna, which deprived him entirely of sight, a loss which he felt the more severely because he was no longer able to see the object of his affection. He was sent to Paris, in the hope that a cure might be effected by couching ; but he obtained no relief, and returned in despair to Geneva. Mdlle. Lullin, having been made acquainted with his misfortune, declared to her relations that she would readily submit to their will if the man of her choice could have done without her :

“But,” said she, “now that he requires a guide to be every moment with him, nothing shall prevent me from being united to him.”

Her family became more obstinate than ever in withholding their consent ; but when she was of age, she respectfully addressed to them the citations required

by law. Mdle. Lullin refused several brilliant offers, always saying,—

“He is so unhappy, I should be base to forsake him.”

At last she married the object of her disinterested affection, and their mutual good conduct soon obtained for them pardon for their disobedience. Madame Huber always preserved the character of a most respectable and irreproachable spouse.

This excellent woman soon discovered a thousand means of supplying the wants which her husband's unfortunate calamity occasioned. During the war she formed whole armies with pins of various sizes, and thus enabled him to distinguish the positions of the different corps; she stuck the pins in a map, and thus gave her unfortunate husband a correct idea of the movements of the troops. A method by which he was enabled to write was invented for him, and his wife formed plans in relief of the places they inhabited. In a word, she had but one occupation, that of making the life of her husband happy. To such a point did this amiable woman carry her attentions, that M. Huber asserted that he would be miserable were he to cease to be blind.

“I should not know,” said he, “to what extent a person in my situation could be beloved; besides, to me my wife is always young, fresh, and pretty, and that is no light matter.”

M. Huber, like most of the Genevese, was so well educated at seventeen that his studies might be regarded as finished. He had a great taste for natural history. He made his wife read to him a number of works on that subject, and particularly relative to bees, of which

he was very fond; but he discovered that all the works which treated of those insects were very imperfect. He requested Madame Huber to provide herself with a magnifying-glass, and to examine carefully the formation and habits of the bee. With her assistance he made several discoveries, which he published under the title of *Recherches sur les Abeilles*, a work which is very highly esteemed. To extensive knowledge M. Huber joined an extraordinary memory. He related in a most graceful style a great variety of interesting anecdotes. He was a good musician, and nothing could be more affecting than to hear him sing the scene between *Œdipus* and his daughter.

His uncle, who was a friend and enthusiastic admirer of Voltaire, had the features of the great man so engraved in his mind that he was in the habit of reproducing them in various ways without any apparent effort of recollection. The best portrait of those features, which, from their varied expression, could with difficulty be correctly transferred to canvas, was finished after M. Huber's sketches. It is alleged that, as he was one day breaking bread and giving bits to his dog, he managed so that the piece which remained in his hand, was an exact silhouette of the man to whom he was completely devoted. Some pictures of this singular description are carefully preserved in his family. He cut out and pinked in a most perfect style. The Genevese have a particular talent for this art, by which they execute charming landscapes with figures and animals; they generally use vellum or pasteboard, and do not assist the effect by drawing; notwithstanding which, the different lines of the view and the leaves

of the trees are perfectly well defined. The works of M. Lullin and Madame Boissier in this way were astonishing; they cut out while walking, without seeming to think of what they were doing. Nothing could be more interesting than to see thus starting from under their scissors objects which the pencil could not have better expressed.

Several artists reside at Geneva, whose works are much esteemed in Paris. Among them are MM. Toppfer and De la Rive, landscape painters; and Massot and Arlaud, whose portraits are remarkable for their striking resemblance. It would be difficult, I believe, to find within an equal space such variety of talent as is to be met within this small, but very populous town; and assuredly, there nowhere else exists a more decided national spirit.

When I lived at Geneva, there were still in the town a great number of wooden houses, the doors of which were so narrow that it was difficult to introduce the engines when fire occurred. The company of firemen consisted of all the young men of the town, who received honours according as their actions deserved distinction. They were, therefore, always ready to expose themselves gratuitously to danger; the glory of saving a fellow-citizen made them ambitious of encountering the greatest perils. When a fire broke out in any part of the town, the tocsin was rung, and the alarum drum beat; nothing could restrain the young men, when they heard these signals, from flying to succour the distressed. On more than one occasion, I have seen them leave a brilliant ball and hasten in full dress to the fire, where they remained until it was extinguished.

A terrible conflagration took place during the period of my residence. Seven houses were burned, and twenty-two lives were lost. The theatre was shut for a fortnight, for nobody could think of partaking of any amusement until the disaster was in some degree repaired. A subscription was opened for the victims, and it was soon filled.

On all important occasions the Genevese act in the same manner; their domestic parsimony may therefore be pardoned. They are niggardly to themselves, but never when called upon to relieve the distress of their fellow-citizens.

It is surprising that their fire-escape has not been adopted in France; it may be raised in two minutes to the highest story of a house; a large sack is attached to the upper extremity. Some of the unfortunate inhabitants, who may not be able to escape by a burning staircase, throw themselves into this sack, and its weight in descending raises another to rescue more lives. The Emperor Alexander applied for models of this machine, and it pleased him so much that he sent presents of superb rings to the mayor, the inventor, and the artist who made the drawings.

The finest promenade in Geneva—the Bastions—was deserted. The statue of Rousseau had been erected there in 1792, and at its foot were executed the fusilades of the Reign of Terror. From that dreadful period, every inhabitant of Geneva avoided that spot. If anyone was seen walking there, a bet might be laid that he was a stranger.

The statue was pulled down, and numerous houses have been built on the promenade. It is no longer pos-

sible to tell the place where crimes were committed, which may be pardoned but cannot be forgotten.

At Geneva we also met M. Sybourg, a Swiss by birth, who had long been sub-governor to the Grand Dukes of Russia ; he had left St. Petersburg enriched by the gifts of his pupils, and he made a most generous use of his fortune by extending his aid to all the members of his family. His extensive information, firmness of character, rigorous probity, and regularity of conduct, rendered him worthy of the difficult task he had undertaken. The Emperors Alexander and Nicholas were chiefly educated by him ; a fact which sufficiently proves that a fortunate choice had been made of their instructor. He used to relate interesting anecdotes of the Court of Russia ; but the sovereigns to whom they refer have ceased to exist, and the praises which their repetition might call forth are now the property of history.

M. August Bontems, Captain of Engineers, arrived about this time from Persia, and excited general attention ; in consequence of that interest which is always attached to a traveller who has encountered great dangers, and has extricated himself with courage. He formed part of General Gardanne's expedition. After suffering much persecution he obtained the friendship of the Prince Royal of Persia, who granted him the Order of the Sun, the insignia of which, and of the Legion of Honour, which he had received long before, he wore together. Having brought with him a complete Persian dress, he was so obliging as sometimes to appear in it to satisfy the curiosity of the ladies who were admitted to the society of his mother, who was herself eminently distinguished. She was worthy to be a descendant of one

of her ancestors, the celebrated Lefort, who was the friend of Peter the Great.

The preparations for our departure from Geneva were made with sincere regret; we left real friends behind us. The three years I spent there passed away agreeably, and I reckon them the most tranquil of my life. While there, I had at least the satisfaction of experiencing no violent chagrin; I was not persecuted by odious calumnies, and I had not to endure all the bitterness of ingratitude! Why did I not remain there? I should have escaped the afflictions which have assailed me; I might have been able to look back without regret, and direct with confidence my thoughts to the future.

I wish to record the profound gratitude I feel for the generous testimonies of friendship which were so kindly bestowed on me in Geneva. There is, in particular, one family to whom I am indebted for the most pleasing moments I passed there. I have no need to name that circle, for, on saying that all amiable qualities were therein united, who can fail to recognize it? I repress my desire to declare what I owe, because to speak of two cherished beings removed in the midst of their career would be to probe the incurable wounds of the unfortunate parents. I weep, and am silent.

## CHAPTER XIV

FERNEY—VOLTAIRE'S HOUSE—DESCRIPTION OF HIS BED-CHAMBER—THE EMPRESS'S JOURNEY TO GENEVA—AFFECTIONATE RECEPTION OF HER MAJESTY—MM. PICTET, BOISSIER, AND PREVOST—A FÊTE ON THE LAKE—THE VICEROY AND VICE-QUEEN VISIT THEIR MOTHER—KIND RECEPTION OF THE EMPRESS—SHE VISITS ALL THE PUBLIC ESTABLISHMENTS

I WENT to Ferney with the conviction that the unfavourable picture of this retreat, given in Madame de Genlis's "Memoirs," was somewhat exaggerated. I imagined that her dislike of Voltaire had caused her to view everything through the veil of prejudice, and that, contrary to her usual custom, she had but ill observed what she had described. I was sure that I should find something to admire in every object at Ferney; the place created by Voltaire could not fail to be beautiful, grand, and magnificent. To justify my favourable anticipations I endeavoured to forget the insipidity and tedious monotony of the *Délices*.<sup>1</sup> In a word, I was determined to see no fault in the residence of the celebrated philosopher. At Ferney Voltaire diffused so many blessings around him that to me the spot appeared, of all others, to inspire an

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<sup>1</sup> A house at the gate of Geneva, long occupied by Voltaire, who gave it the above name. It belonged to the descendants of the celebrated Dr. Tronchin.

exalted idea of his character; I was thus predisposed to be pleased with everything I should see.

On arriving at Ferney, I found no reason to alter my opinion. I saw a number of houses built under the direction of Voltaire: the structures were simple, tasteful, and elegant, and seemed calculated to ensure comfort to their occupants. I saw a beautiful chapel, also erected by the man who often seemed inclined to repel the mild and sublime consolations of religion. I grew more and more impatient to view the château, and I reached the gate full of favourable prepossessions.

I was, however, suddenly disenchanted on beholding a very common-looking house, the access to which was through a dirty crooked lane, just broad enough to allow a carriage to turn. The entrance to a place, which was so long the abode of genius, should present something of a majestic character, and not resemble the paltry avenues which are met with in the environs of Paris. The approach to Voltaire's habitation should be divested of everything mean; I was told that M. de Badé, the owner of the place, had made great alterations on the exterior of this château, which ought to have been held sacred as an historical monument. The numerous foreigners whom curiosity continually attracts to Ferney must form a strange opinion of the taste and understanding of M. de Badé. He must be ranked among the Goths, distinguished by the title of the *Bande noire*, who destroyed, or disfigured everything which deserved to be respected.

We entered Voltaire's bed-chamber, and here the man who shewed us over the château detailed a number of particulars which we should readily have guessed without his assistance. His unmoveable countenance and

tedious manner sufficiently denoted that he had repeated the same story over and over again for the last ten years. He took the trouble to explain things which required no explanation, and instead of being useful to visitors, his tiresome tongue rendered him insufferably annoying.

The chamber is small, dirty, and much out of repair; the curtains of the bed, which are of thick damask, are hanging in tatters, for every visitor avails himself of the privilege of clipping off a scrap as a relic of the *great man*. This sacrilege should not be permitted. Everything in the room bears melancholy traces of neglect: the whole furniture consists of some chairs, which are nearly all broken, a shabby table, and a few wretched portraits in crayons, among which are one of Lekain in the costume of Orosman, and one of the Marchioness du Châtelet. A small mausoleum of black and white marble, in very bad taste, fills a niche in front of the chimney; it contains the heart of Voltaire. A number of obscure names written with pencil are scribbled over the monument, the walls of the room, the bed, &c. How can people thus profane what death at least should render sacred!

Just as we were about to retire from the apartment, the examination of which had powerfully excited our feelings, our *cicerone*, without the least ceremony, asked us for *something to drink*. It would be difficult to conceive anything more revolting than such a request made in such a place.

The garden is far from pretty: it contains a long arbour which Voltaire used as a promenade, and in which he frequently wrote. He certainly could find no inspiration in such a place, for nothing can be more gloomy than this long alley of elm trees, between which

a few narrow openings here and there afford a distant view of part of the lake. In short, Ferney is interesting only from its associations. The environs of Geneva present so many pleasant residences and so many delightful prospects, that it is difficult to conceive how Voltaire could have made choice of such a spot amidst the beauties with which that picturesque country abounds.

There was something like coquetry in thus taking up his abode in a place devoid of all natural charms. He must have thought his own celebrity sufficiently attractive; a belief which was no doubt well warranted by the fact that people from all quarters of the world solicited the honour of being introduced to him. The idle and the vain thronged to Ferney just for the sake of saying, "*I have seen Voltaire.*" The learned went to form a more close acquaintance with that universal genius, who may, perhaps, be accused of having led many of his admirers into a wrong course.

At this period, Josephine was travelling under the name of the Countess d'Arberg: she could not have chosen a more honourable title. She came to Geneva to see the viceroy and the vice-queen, who had arrived from Milan, for the purpose of passing a few days with her. We had not seen her for a long time; for, as I believe I have before stated, our fallen fortunes kept us banished from a Court where luxury was carried to the utmost extreme. On account of some old obligations, my mother conceived it to be our duty to pay our respects to the Empress at a time when her majesty was forsaken by persons to whom she had been a thousand times more serviceable than to us. We therefore begged the honour

of being presented to her, and we received a most gracious answer, appointing an early audience.

The Empress put up at the "Hotel d'Angleterre," situated at Sécheron, a beautiful village near Geneva, on the banks of the lake. We went there, expecting that the presence of the exalted personages would occasion an extraordinary commotion, and that all accommodation would be denied to private individuals to make room for the Court. How we were surprised to find everything as quiet as before the arrival of the Empress, who travelled in no more state than a private lady of fortune.

Madame d'Audenaarde, who filled the situation of Dame du Palais after the divorce, ushered us into a very small apartment without any ante-chamber; this was her majesty's bed-chamber. She was in a kind of half dress, but looked infinitely better than when seated on the Imperial throne. Her figure, though partaking more of *embonpoint* than formerly, was still as elegant as ever; her complexion was less brown than it used to be, and the charm of her dignified manners rendered her the most fascinating of women. Her majesty received us with the greatest kindness; she revived the recollection of many circumstances of our former acquaintance, and she sent for the viceroy on purpose to present us to him. He was, like his charming mother, the sworn enemy of all etiquette, and he behaved to us just as he was wont to do when we knew him only as *Eugène de Beauharnais*. The Empress informed us that she was to set out next day for Paris, and as she understood it was likewise our intention shortly to visit the capital *par excellence*, she added that she would be happy to see us at Malmaison and Navarre, not to pay a visit of ceremony but to stay some time with

her. This invitation we regarded as one that would be soon forgotten ; but we were nevertheless much touched with the kindness of her majesty, who with the greatest affability conversed with us for upwards of an hour.

Whilst we were with her she received the visits of many distinguished individuals of the town, among whom were M. Maurice, the Mayor, and Professors Pictet, Boissier, and Prévost, justly celebrated for their knowledge and excellent character. She discoursed with them on science and art with a facility which astonished them. But Josephine could talk on any subject, and on all well. She listened to their answers with a kind attention, which gained their confidence by shewing that she was interested in what she heard. She made quotations from several authors, but without any appearance of pedantry, and we should have been surprised at the varied acquirements she displayed had we not known that the Emperor used to call her his *agenda*. In relating an anecdote, Napoleon would pretend to forget the date in order to give Josephine an opportunity of correcting him.

On the day of our interview with the Empress, there was to be a grand festival at Geneva, called the Festival of the Lake. The inhabitants of the houses on the enchanting banks of the lake sent out their boats richly ornamented and rowed by men dressed in white with coloured girdles round their waists. Many of the boats were filled by musicians, and in the midst of this little flotilla the *grand city barge* advanced majestically, rowed by the National Guards, the band playing appropriate airs. In the evening a magnificent display of fireworks was exhibited on the bridge, and thousands of rockets fired from the boats mingled with the shouts of the immense crowd which lined the shore. No description

can convey an adequate idea of the magnificence of the illuminated lake, or of the aspect of Mount Blanc rearing his head majestically amidst the glare of the fireworks. The reports of the rockets echoing among the mountains served to heighten the effect of a scene which can never be forgotten by those who witnessed it.

A boat drawn by two swans was prepared for the Empress, and the other boats on the lake having pressed closely around it, they were directed to put back; her majesty, however, begged that they might be permitted to approach.

"I wish," said she, "to let people see how much I am delighted with everything around me, and how pleased I am with the reception I have experienced. It is so gratifying to be beloved!"

These words were repeated from mouth to mouth, and cries of "*Vive l'impératrice! Vive le vice-roi,*" proved how truly she was beloved.

She visited the manufactories, at which she made many purchases, and she quitted Geneva with the blessings of the whole population. The upper classes of society had an opportunity of appreciating the elegance of her manners, the soundness of her understanding, the extensive information she had acquired since her second marriage, her taste for the arts, &c. With the poor, whom she never forgot, she left abundant testimonials of her benevolence; for amidst scenes of tumult and festivity the Empress thought of the distressed, and enabled them to participate in her pleasure.

Thus has Josephine acquired a celebrity which time can never efface. The praises of the unfortunate are imperishable, and *the memory of good sovereigns lives when great ones are forgotten.*

## CHAPTER XV

VISIT TO THE GLACIERS—IMPRUDENCE OF TWO PARISIAN BELLES—THE ALBINOS OF CHAMOUNY—THE GUIDE BALMAT AND M. DE SASSURE—TRAIT OF COURAGE IN AN INN-KEEPER'S MAID—A CRETIN OF CHAMOUNY—THE TRAVELLERS' ALBUM—MADAME DE STAËL REFUSES TO ASCEND THE GLACIERS

Two ladies of my acquaintance, who had come to Savoy on an excursion of pleasure, wished me to accompany them in an ascent of the glaciers. We set out on a gloomy day, so that we could not half enjoy the beauty of the enchanting prospects which momentarily present themselves between Geneva and Chamouny. The sun cast not a single ray on the elegant cascade of Chède, its charming lake, and the valley of Maglan; but, notwithstanding this, the effect was delightful. Before I set out I made enquiries as to the most proper dress for such an excursion. My companions, two pretty women just arrived from Paris, did not adopt the same precaution, and they soon had cause to regret their want of foresight. As we ascended the mountains, a thick fog in which we were enveloped completely uncurled their feathers, which drooped over their hats in the most inconvenient way. Their light dresses, open at the throat, afforded no protection against the frost, and their thin-soled slippers

were almost worn out before they reached the inn. I, on the contrary, was so comfortably equipped in a black straw bonnet, thick travelling shoes, and a good warm wadded mantle, that I scarcely felt the cold.

On the summit of Montanvert, whence we descended to the sea of ice, we were provided with thick coverings of striped woollen cloth, and this costume was rendered more burlesque by large bouquets of rhododendron, which, however, we put aside. It would be vain in me to enter upon any description of the scene which now opened to our view. Many celebrated writers have failed in their attempt to convey an idea of its grandeur. The sublime confusion which nature here presents, the immense height of the icy peaks resembling innumerable castles, the enormous chasms shaped like funnels, where one false step must be followed by certain death, the deep silence, broken only by the noise of falling avalanches, or by the plaintive pipes of the shepherds who are imprisoned among these regions during many months of the year—all excite a mingled feeling of melancholy and admiration. While we contemplated the awful grandeur of the surrounding scene, tears unconsciously gushed from our eyes, and my fair companions seemed surprised to find their attention engrossed by anything besides the elegance of their dress, which might adorn though it could not add to their charms.

Perhaps I might with advantage introduce here some romantic episode to give interest to this brief account of an excursion, which will ever remain engraven in my memory; but I have promised to adhere strictly to truth. Honesty and sincerity may perhaps procure for me that notice to which I can lay no claim

on the score of talent. I must therefore candidly acknowledge the mortifying truth that I encountered no extraordinary adventure on my ascent to the glaciers.

I stopped, as everybody does, at the fountain which Florian's "Claudine" has immortalised. I gathered strawberries on the ice, and brought home some valuable plants, of which I made a herbal.<sup>1</sup> I saw a chamois, a royal eagle, and the Albinos. These people were born at Chamouny, and having travelled through all Europe had made a little fortune by exhibiting themselves. On their return home they purchased a flock of sheep, which they tend themselves. Their hair is perfectly white, as are also their eyelashes and eyebrows. Their red eyes are perpetually in motion, and the light causes them such pain that they wear hats with broad brims for shades. If anyone suddenly snatch off these hats they fall down, apparently suffering great pain, which, as they say, is as severe as if a penknife were thrust into their eyes; they speak English well, and they collected a great deal of money by exhibiting their ugly faces in different parts of Great Britain.

In reply to some questions I put to them, they informed me that their parents were in no respect like themselves, but that their mother (now dead) had been frightened by a wild rabbit, to which circumstance they attributed their peculiar appearance. After her death her body was opened by some medical men, with the

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<sup>1</sup> Méhul, the composer, whose name is connected with all that is estimable in talent, genius and virtue, earnestly requested to have my herbal. He was then given over by his physicians. I gave it him, and he died a few months after.

view of ascertaining whether there was anything peculiar in her conformation; but nothing tended to throw any light on a phenomenon which has excited the astonishment of the faculty. I questioned them about their travels; and the younger, who evinced great natural intelligence, spoke very sensibly concerning the countries he had visited. Like all mountaineers he preferred his native home to every country he had seen; and there is good reason for this preference, for the mountains of Chamouny combine all that is beautiful and sublime in nature. He told me that he and his brother were both married, but that their children, all of whom were daughters, were unfortunately *pretty brunettes*; therefore, added he, they will never gain by their faces what we have got by ours. They are both remarkable for their mild disposition, and are beloved by all the inhabitants of the valley. Travellers always present them with a little money, which they receive with thanks, and lay by to increase the portion of their *unfortunate* daughters.

We were conducted on this expedition by Balmat, surnamed *Mont Blanc*, from having been the guide of M. de Saussure. He is a very remarkable man.

Although still the peasant in language and habits, his conversation is both interesting and instructive. He has an extensive knowledge of mineralogy and botany, and is acquainted with all the peculiarities of the interesting region in which he dwells, and where he frequently comes in contact with educated people from all parts of the world. He has thus collected a multitude of anecdotes which he relates with a degree of energy that is rarely met with in persons of more polished manners. He never forgets any remarkable person he

sees, and he gives natural and animated descriptions of them. When at a loss for words to express his idea, he has recourse to gestures which cannot be misunderstood.

He told us that *only one woman* had ascended Mont Blanc to the height attained by M. de Saussure. She was an inn-keeper's servant girl, who declared that she was ashamed of the want of courage displayed by her sex; and she signified her intention to accompany the first travellers who should attempt the excursion. In vain was she assured that she could never undergo the fatigue of so difficult an ascent, that she must sleep for two whole nights on the ice, &c., nothing could alter her determination, and she shortly after joined a party of two Englishmen and seven guides, who set out on the perilous expedition. The girl had not accomplished more than half of her journey when she became ill! She was urged to renounce her project, but without effect; she declared that she would rather die than descend without placing her foot upon the spot where M. de Saussure had stood. The higher she ascended, the weaker she became; her strength, but not her courage, forsook her. On reaching a certain height, the excessive cold produced violent vomiting, but when she was urged to go back she was seized with such dreadful nervous attacks that there was no alternative but to let her encounter the danger she had resolved to brave.

"Carry me, drag me," she cried; "only let me touch that stone which perpetuates the immortal enterprise, and I shall die content."

At length, after great fatigue and suffering, she accomplished her object, and inscribed her name beside

that of the celebrated traveller. The guides were obliged to carry her during nearly the whole of the descent, and she remained six weeks between life and death. I have unluckily forgotten the name of this heroine; I noted it down in a memorandum-book, which I lost in the course of my movements.

Balmat introduced the breed of Merino sheep into his beloved valley, for which he received a gold medal from the Minister of the Interior. This token of honour he shewed us with great satisfaction. It had been transmitted to him through the medium of his *friend* Barante, for so he called the Prefect of Geneva, at whose table he often dined.

There was at Chamouny a deaf and dumb man in imbecility—almost a Cretin. It could scarcely have been imagined that such an unfortunate being could have been of any use in the world; however, he was rendered useful in the following manner:

If by accident a calf, a sheep, or—as it has happened twice within the last twenty years—a man should fall down one of the awful chasms, thick ropes are fastened round the body and under the arms of the deaf and dumb man, and he is then lowered into the gulf. He has been taught to bring up whatever he finds, and having seized the body, he is raised up with it in his arms, apparently as unconscious as a machine. As a reward for this service he receives a little meat, of which he is very fond, but which the other inhabitants of the valley rarely taste, as they live chiefly on cheese and curds. When he gets any food that pleases him, he expresses his joy by hideous bursts of laughter; and the mirth of this wretched creature excites melancholy feelings in

those who witness it. A smile upon his emaciated countenance is a frightful convulsion.

The album in which travellers are accustomed to inscribe their poetic effusions is so full of absurdities that I presume few will now venture to add to the number. It is curious to see thus assembled together the names of the poets and scholars of all countries, but it is not certainly in their *impromptus* that any trace of their talents is discoverable. A proof that the sublime scenery of nature is not always a source of inspiration.

Madame de Staël, who was so bold in her literary conceptions and in her political conduct, betrayed all the weakness of a woman when she had to face physical danger or encounter fatigue. She is said to have stayed at the inn of Chamouny while her friends ascended the glaciers, observing that she could hear from them all that could be learnt from description, and that her imagination would supply the rest. Certainly nothing short of her imagination could conceive the awful magnificence of such a scene.

## CHAPTER XVI

DEPARTURE FROM GENEVA FOR PARIS — WE GO TO MALMAISON—HER MAJESTY'S DEPARTURE FOR NAVARRE —A MESSENGER IS SENT FOR US FOUR DAYS AFTER IN A BERLINE AND SIX HORSES—OUR ARRIVAL AT NAVARRE — GRACIOUS RECEPTION GIVEN US BY THE EMPRESS—MDLLE. AVRILLON AND MADAME D'AUDENARDE —MY AWKWARDNESS AND EMBARRASSMENT AT COURT —THE BISHOP OF EVREUX—THE COUNTESS D'ARBERG —MESDAMES DE RÉMUSAT, DE SÉGUR, DE COLBERT, DE MACKAU, DE VIEIL-CASTEL—MM. DE BARAL, DE BEAUMONT, DE MONACO, DE TURPIN, ETC.

WE at length left Geneva on our return to Paris. When, from the top of a mountain of Jura, I looked back for the last time upon that city where I had passed so many happy moments, I experienced a feeling of bitter regret—a presentiment of what I was doomed afterwards to suffer. During the whole of our journey nothing could banish this emotion from my mind; and, though consoled by the presence of my family, I could not be brought to forget the agreeable time I had passed in a place which I ardently wish to see again, but to which I have probably bidden an eternal adieu.

After a few days' repose we proposed to pay a visit to the Empress, who was at Malmaison. She received

us with still greater affability than at Geneva, and expressed her earnest wish that we should pass a few months with her at Navarre, whither she was about to proceed. It was now the end of November, and, notwithstanding the attractions which Paris held out to me, I pressed my mother to accept the invitation. It was therefore agreed that her majesty should send for us as soon as she was settled in her new residence. She told us that there was no occasion to go to any expense for our Court dresses, for she had ordered a sort of uniform to be worn, so that all the ladies dressed alike. The dress was a robe of deep green; no matter of what stuff, the colour alone was indispensable. We therefore busied ourselves in making very plain dresses, and I waited with impatience for the moment when I should again see this Princess, who knew how to charm every person who approached her; and who, like a beneficent fairy, assuaged all sorrows.

On the 4th of December, a berline with the Imperial arms arrived, drawn by six horses, and having an outrider before, another behind, and two footmen on the box. The Empress had carried her attentions so far as to send one of her principal *femmes-de-chambre*<sup>1</sup> for us, and to make us a little acquainted beforehand with the manner of living at Navarre. I could scarcely trust my eyes when I looked upon this brilliant equipage; and I, who had been used to the large, heavy, and filthy diligences common at that period, rejoiced like a child at

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1 M<sup>lle</sup>. Avrillon. Her manners shewed that she often approached her majesty's person. No one could display more obliging conduct than this lady, who was entirely devoted to the Empress.

travelling in such state. How great was my joy on stepping into this beautiful carriage! We were hurried along with a rapidity which astounded me, and lost not a minute in changing horses, which a courier sent forward ordered to be prepared for us. We reached Mantey in three hours and a half, and found an excellent dinner prepared for us. I was so anxious to see the Empress that I could hardly find patience to wait to the end of the course. At last, at eight o'clock, we entered the long avenue leading to the palace; it was well lighted. The nearer I approached, the more did my joy give place to a kind of fear which I could not surmount.

Never having been at Court, and a stranger to its manners, and above all to the dissimulation which I was told formed the basis of everyone's conduct there, I could not repress an emotion which I felt arising in my breast, and which became more and more painful. It was not occasioned by any dread of the Empress; she was too good! but the ladies of the Court, the chamberlains—what would they say of my embarrassment? I questioned Mdlle. Avrillon respecting the persons about her majesty, and disclosed to her the fear I was under of being guilty of some awkwardness. Neither her kind assurances nor the self-possession of my mother could restore my confidence; and I now dreaded the interview as much as I before desired it. At length the carriage stopped, and a number of footmen hastened to assist us in alighting, and in removing our trunks and boxes. We were then shewn to our apartments where we found the supper-table covered.

Mdlle. Avrillon assured us that the Empress would

not see us till the next day, as her majesty would be desirous that we should enjoy some repose after the fatigue of our journey. She added that she would go and give the Empress notice of our arrival, and desired me to be quite easy on the score of my reception, which she was sure would not fail to be agreeable. I breathed again at the thought of having one whole night left me to prepare for my presentation.

When I waited on the Empress at Malmaison I laboured under no fear of that kind, because there the drawing-room was so full of company that no one could notice me among the multitude; besides, I saw only one of those crowded circles to which I had been accustomed. But I considered that at a distance from Paris people look out for something to amuse them; and I thought that one so unacquainted with fashion as myself would afford a fine butt for the wit of the courtiers, the whole set of whom appeared to my imagination no better than impertinent scoffers.

In the midst of these consoling reflections I heard a knock at our door, and immediately afterwards Madame d'Audenarde entered, who asked how it happened that we were sitting there so much at our ease when her majesty was waiting for us. At these words I scarcely knew what to think; I did all that I could to put off the dreaded moment, and the more I tried the worse I succeeded in excusing myself. Of course, my scruples were easily answered, and I was forced to go and put on the green dress, which at that moment appeared to me frightfully ugly. Madame d'Audenarde, with great good nature, endeavoured to dissipate what she called my terrors, assuring me that I should find the company

in the saloon at Navarre no less indulgent than elsewhere ; and of the justness of her observation I had a proof before my eyes, but yet I could not bring myself to believe that all were like Madame d'Audenarde. I spent as much time as I possibly could at my toilette ; and when I saw that I must at last go, my feet would scarcely support me. Madame d'Audenarde preceded us, but my confusion did not allow me to see her natural and easy manner.

We passed through an ante-chamber full of footmen. There were thirty of them ; but to me they seemed not fewer than two hundred. We then entered a saloon where there were four *valets de chambre*, with embroidered dresses, and swords at their side ; and lastly into a room where stood the usher, who announced the company to her majesty. Afraid of appearing too haughty, I made obeisance upon obeisance, from the time I entered the first ante-chamber until we stopped at the door, where Madame d'Audenarde said :

"Come, take courage ; this is the gallery in which the Empress is."

However singular it may appear, it is not the less true that in a moment all my fears left me, and the name of the Empress acted like a talisman in dissipating my terrors. I now followed my mother with confidence. I made my three curtesies—very awkwardly, I suppose, but the benevolence which appeared on the countenances of all around, the natural consequence of the goodness of the sovereign, soon made me feel perfectly at ease.

When I entered the saloon her majesty was playing at tric-trac with the Bishop of Evreux, for whom she justly felt great respect. He had the management of

the greater part of the funds which she set apart for charitable purposes. He was well fitted for such service by his well-known beneficence and unostentatious piety. There was no austerity in the manners of this reverend old man; he was of a cheerful disposition, and was obliging to the young, by whom he was adored. He fulfilled with great strictness all the painful duties of his episcopal office; and he was often seen conversing with the dying poor, carrying them whatever remedies might be needful, and, when he heard the confession of some heavy sin, whispering words of consolation, which calmed the cruel torments of remorse, and revived the hope of pardon in their withered, desponding hearts.

His presence never interrupted the diversions of the young people met together at Navarre, and his conversation and example often prompted to honourable conduct. All who desired to meet with the approbation of so good a man became better by that ambition. This portrait is flattering, but its correctness will be acknowledged by all who have had the happiness of frequently seeing the original.

After being presented to the Empress, we were introduced to Madame la Comtesse d'Arberg. The fine and noble figure of this lady would have struck awe into those who approached her, had not her dignity been tempered by an expression of mildness and benevolence.

At the period of the divorce she was unwilling to leave Josephine, with whom she had been Dame du Palais. The Emperor, aware of the great attachment she felt for her mistress, and admiring the nobleness of her sentiments and behaviour, named her lady of

honour in the place of Madame de la Rochefoucauld.<sup>1</sup> Madame d'Arberg possessed, he well knew, sufficient energy of character to resist the excessive expenses which the Empress's charity led her into. By her place she possessed entire authority over the household; and it is owing to the great regularity which she established that the Empress was enabled to continue her charities, without diminishing that style of splendour in which she delighted, and which she would have felt much pain to renounce. Far from being offended with the remon-

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1 After the divorce Madame la Comtesse de la Rochefoucauld, who was lady of honour to Josephine, lost no time in applying to the Emperor to be appointed to the same situation under Marie Louise as that in which she had served the divorced Empress, by whom she had been loaded with favours. Napoleon, whose noble soul revolted at such an instance of ingratitude, deprived Madame de la Rochefoucauld of her place, and immediately appointed Madame la Comtesse d'Arberg in her stead. The following letter, written by Josephine to Madame de la Rochefoucauld, affords a testimony of the attachment which I have said the Empress felt for that lady:

“TO MADAME DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULD.

“We leave here at four o'clock, and you may therefore expect us to breakfast at ten. I hasten to send you this note that you may not be taken by surprise. You know the Emperor's activity and punctuality, and both seem to increase with time. An hour ago I was ignorant of our departure. We were at the card-table: 'Get ready, madam,' said he to me, 'to step into your carriage at midnight.'—'But it is already past nine o'clock.'—'True; you must have time for your toilette. We will set out, then, at two o'clock.'—'Where are we going?'—'To Bayonne.'—'No further? But my pensioners; I must settle their monthly allowance.'—'An hour to devote to the unfortunate, madam; how can I refuse you that? Take another to write to your friends; you will not forget Madame de la Rochefoucauld.' Adieu, my dear friend, I must now devote a few minutes to repose. I shall be carried sleeping to my travelling carriage, and shall not open my eyes again, until I wake in your arms and greet you with a sincere embrace.”

stances of her *grande maîtresse* (for thus she called Madame d'Arberg) she always acknowledged her to be in the right, and yielded with a charming grace to her just observations. Madame d'Arberg was no longer in the bloom of youth, but yet few looked better than she did.

She was the mother of Madame Mouton Countess de Lobau, who had lately been confined in childbirth. When her majesty was informed of that event, some one inconsiderately asked (of course not thinking that Madame d'Arberg was within hearing), whether Madame Mouton had been brought to bed of a Merino. "No, sir," replied Madame d'Arberg. "I have the happiness to be the grandmother of a fine girl;" and immediately after, she turned the discourse to another subject to relieve the confusion of the unlucky wit.

A gentleman was one day reading in her presence a work, in which there occurred some allusion of the amours of the celebrated Alfieri and the Countess of Albany, Madame d'Arberg's sister. He hesitated, and endeavoured to pass a few lines, but became unintelligible from the difficulty of preserving the connection of the story. "Go on, sir, boldly," said she to him, smiling, "for I suppose *I am there*."

These two anecdotes will suffice to shew the good nature of Madame d'Arberg, and how far her disposition was from partaking of any of that severity and bitterness with which she has been reproached. I always found her ready to excuse and protect others.

Madame d'Arberg, lady of honour, Mesdames de Rémusat, de Ségur, de Colbert, de Mackau, de Vieil-Castel, de Sérent, ladies of the household; Madame

Gazani, reader; M. de Beaumont, gentleman usher; M. de Barral, Archbishop of Tours, first almoner; M. Henri de Monaco, first equerry; MM. de Turpin, Vieil-Castel and Montholon, chamberlains; MM. Portales and Guitry, equerries, composed the society of Navarre, to which are to be added, Mdle. Louise de Castellane,<sup>1</sup> my mother, and myself.

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1 The Empress had been on terms of close intimacy with this young lady's mother, who died at variance with her family, absolutely ruined in circumstances, and leaving three daughters behind. Her majesty placed two of them at the school of Madame Campan, for whom she entertained a great regard. She took upon herself all the expenses of their education, and when it was completed she placed near her person Mdle. Louise, the young lady I have just mentioned. Several of her majesty's nieces were also at the establishment of Madame Campan, who frequently received letters from Josephine, relative to any failing she might have discovered in those young ladies. The following copy of one was handed to me by the person who is in possession of the original.

“TO MADAME CAMPAN, AT SAINT-GERMAIN.

“In sending my niece back to you, dear Madame Campan, I request you to receive my thanks and my reproaches; the former for your friendly attentions to the child, and the excellent education you are giving her; the latter for the defects your penetration will not have failed to notice, but which your indulgence has overlooked in her. This young girl is of a gentle but cold disposition; well instructed, but haughty; witty, but devoid of understanding; she fails to please, and is indifferent about it. She imagines that the fame of her uncle and the bravery of her father supply the want of everything else. Let her know in a very abrupt and uncereemonious way that those qualities in them are nothing to her. We live in times when everyone is the artificer of his own fortune; and those who serve the state in the highest rank of society are entitled to no other advantage or privilege than that of being more amiable and more useful than the rest of the community. Thus alone can envy be made to overlook their superiority. My dear Madame Campan should not have allowed my niece to be ignorant of this truth, and should be constantly repeating it, in my name. I desire that they may treat, as their equals, all their companions, the greater part of whom are at least of as much consequence as herself, and whose

MM. Horeau, the physician of the establishment, and Deschamps, the private secretary of Josephine, came to spend their evenings in the saloon; but they were waited upon in their own apartments, and only dined with the Empress when they were specially invited.

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only defect is that they were not born of more talented or more fortunate parents."

Madame Campan has been severely criticised concerning her mode of education; great pains have been taken to collect some scattered adventures, the heroines of which had been reared by that celebrated woman, in order to prove that all the calumnies heaped upon her establishment and herself were founded in truth. As she had a great number of boarders at her house, it might have been thought quite natural that some of them should have failed to adhere to the principles in which they had been brought up; since it unfortunately happens that the most watchful tenderness of a mother having an only daughter fails in the object of guarding her from the consequences of her frivolous and giddy attachments. Madame Campan was in the enjoyment of Court favour; she was visited by Princesses and Queens; this was enough to excite a feeling of animosity against her, and to give rise to a variety of equally absurd and uncharitable reports. I have had no direct intercourse with Madame Campan, but I was on terms of intimacy with many of her pupils, who have acted as conspicuous a part in the world by the undeviating correctness of their conduct as by their knowledge and accomplishments. I am acquainted with a boarding school which well deserves to supply the place of the establishment at St. Germain; the wit and elegant manners of the mistress, the principles she instils into her pupils, the admirable appearance and excellent situation of the house, the merits of the professors, contribute to raise this boarding school above every other in Paris. When I name M. Grenier for drawing, M. Charles Rhein for the pianoforte, M. Foignet for the harp, M. Sor for the guitar, M. Lefort for whatever relates to instruction in general, and M. Ferdinand for dancing, I am contributing to secure the best education to the young ladies who may be confided to the care of Madame Migneron, of the Rue de Valois in the Faubourg du Roule. I think I am rendering an essential service to mothers of families when I point out to their notice this extensive establishment. I would as readily name a better one if I were acquainted with any.

This circle was sufficiently cheerful to give charms to the conversation ; added to which, none was better calculated than the Empress to enliven it by her spirited relation of certain anecdotes connected with her singular destiny, some of which I shall hereafter notice. I never saw her give the least indication of ill humour during the five months of my residing with her ; and it will be seen, by the description of our daily engagements, that I passed a great part of the time by her side. This evenness of temper, which it would be difficult to find in a private individual, is the distinguishing feature in the character of the fascinating woman who possessed so many brilliant qualities.

## CHAPTER XVII

A DAY AT NAVARRE—HABITS OF THE EMPRESS—DETAILS CONCERNING THE PERSONS OF HER HOUSEHOLD—AN INHABITANT OF EVREUX IS INVITED TO DINNER—STRANGE ANECDOTE—THE GLASS OF HOT WATER—MY AWKWARDNESS AT TABLE—DELICATE ATTENTION OF THE EMPRESS—SOME OF THE HOUSEHOLD COME TO TAKE SHARE OF MY SUPPER IN MY OWN APARTMENT—THE EMPRESS DISMISSES HER ESCORT—THE EMPEROR WRITES TO MADAME D'ARBERG—COUNT DE CHAMBAUDAIN

OUR daily occupations were generally as follows: we attended every Sunday the mass performed in the chapel of the palace by a chaplain in ordinary; M. de Barral officiated on festivals. We sat down to breakfast at ten o'clock, and were expected to be in the saloon before her majesty, who was extremely punctual, being, no doubt, of opinion with Louis XVIII., that punctuality is the politeness of kings.<sup>1</sup> Her majesty instantly repaired to the dining room; if anyone failed to come down at the appointed hour, a head-ache was pleaded in excuse and breakfast was taken up to the absent person's apartment.

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<sup>1</sup> That pleasing authoress, Madame de Souza, made use of a pretty expression, which was considered as the companion of this remark. She said that cleanliness was the elegance of the poor. The idea is as just as it is well expressed.

The breakfast, as well as the dinner, only consisted of one course, with the exception of the dessert, which formed the second course; the soup, the first dishes, the roast meat, and the dainties, were all served up at the same time. There were, besides, large sideboards covered with pastry, jellies, &c. A footman stood in attendance behind each chair; four stewards, a butler, and two upper servants, handed round the different dishes on the table, and every kind of wine. On rising from table, the footmen in attendance presented a blue goblet with a glass of lukewarm water to rinse the mouth.

An inhabitant of Evreux, who was invited to dine, supposed it was the custom to drink off the water, and did so without hesitation; it made him so ill that he was under the necessity of immediately quitting the room. This blunder gave rise to much merriment.

My fear of exposing myself by some awkward act made me determine not to partake of anything at the table. I accordingly abstained from eating during the first days of my arrival at Navarre; Madame d'Arberg perceived it, and the friendly interest she took in me led her to ask if I wanted to starve myself. I acknowledged to her that I preferred eating dry bread in my own room rather than expose myself to any breach of manners. She laughed at such childish timidity, and mentioned it at the table next day to her majesty, who ordered that a fowl and some Malaga wine should be taken every night to my apartment, as she could not allow me to put up with such dry fare in her own house.

The ladies who occupied the apartments adjoining mine took pleasure in coming to partake of my supper,

which I was thus prevented from eating to my heart's content, and I had thenceforward to call for an increased portion. In order to avoid keeping the footman up at late hours, MM. de Portalès and de Turpin waited upon us and lent us their private plate.

At the expiration of a week, after having attentively examined the behaviour of the company at table, their manner of drinking, &c., I found myself as great an adept as my neighbours, and resolved that I should dine as they did. Nevertheless, we continued to enjoy our fowl at night, and retired in consequence at a very late hour. These suppers were kept up until we left for Malmaison, where our apartments were too near the Empress to allow of our keeping up those nightly *rendez-vous*, which would have disturbed her rest.

The Empress had behind her at table two valets, a basque running footman, a chasseur, and a chief steward. The service was generally of plate; at dessert, however, it was of porcelain, painted with fruits and flowers. On days of ceremony a magnificent service of Sèvres porcelain made its appearance; it had been presented by the Emperor subsequently to his divorce; the golden plateau was a gift from the City of Paris on the day of the coronation, as well as a toilette and tea-table, which her majesty kept at Malmaison. She named the two persons who were to sit near her; the viceroy and the Queen of Holland did the same when they were on a visit, as well as Madame d'Arberg. The rest of the company placed themselves as they thought proper.

Breakfast generally lasted three-quarters of an hour. Everyone then retired to the gallery, which was used as a saloon. The Empress worked at tapestry, the ladies

at various objects, and a chamberlain on duty read the novels, travels, and memoirs that made their appearance. It was then that I became acquainted for the first time with the "Itinerary" of M. de Châteaubriand, which created so strong an interest that it was instantly taken up and read a second time. When the weather was favourable, the company took a ride. At two o'clock three carriages and four drove us to the beautiful forest of Evreux or to the vicinity of that town. Her majesty always named Madame d'Arberg, a lady of honour, and a visitor, to accompany her. The remainder of the household seated themselves indiscriminately in the other two carriages. The equerry on duty rode in full uniform at the door on the right hand of the Empress, an officer of cuirassiers at the other door, and a picket of that corps followed the calash. Feeling annoyed at this etiquette, her majesty took upon herself to suppress it; she allowed the equerry and officer to wait upon her in a frock coat, and directed that the escort should only attend her on days of ceremony.

The Emperor was informed of it, and he wrote a severe letter to Madame d'Arberg, saying that it must never be forgotten that the Empress and Queen had been *crowned*; everything should be done at a distance from the Tuileries as if she were still in that palace. He had forgotten the pages when he formed the establishment of her household, but he would now appoint twelve persons to that duty (he kept his word a few months afterwards); he would not allow of any frock coats—it was shewing a great want of respect for her majesty. It became necessary, therefore, to resume the embroidered dress, the sword, and hat with feathers—a restraint which the

gentlemen concerned found extremely irksome to them.<sup>1</sup>

The ride was generally over at four o'clock, and we returned to our respective apartments until the hour of six, when we repaired to dinner, which lasted an hour. It was almost invariably attended by some visitors from Evreux, such as the prefect, the mayor, the commandant of the gendarmerie, the colonel of the regiment of cuirassiers which did garrison duty in that town for the purpose of providing an escort, and several ladies. M. Dupont de l'Eure, who was not at that time so strenuous an opponent of people of rank as he is at the present day, was constantly on a visit at Navarre, courted a smile or a look from the sovereign, and affected an unbounded attachment to the Emperor's *absolute* power. The Empress said that this was not always the case, and she greatly enjoyed the restraint which she supposed him to be under. He has now returned to his former opinions. He made a greater impression on me than the rest, because he wore a small black silk cloak<sup>2</sup>; this did not appear in good keeping with his grand cross of the Legion of Honour, set in diamonds, a gift from her majesty. He often sat down to cards with her, and she felt great delight in listening to his witty conversation. This was not the case of the Prefect, M. de Chambaudoin, whose *simplicity* was proverbial amongst us. I shall have occasion to quote an instance of it.

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<sup>1</sup> The Empress had fixed upon a particular uniform, which they wore in the evening. It consisted of a green coat with black velvet collar and facings, and a stripe of gold embroidery. This was less showy and less expensive than the costumes of the equeuries and chamberlains.

<sup>2</sup> I believe he held the rank of Imperial Solicitor.

After dinner, her majesty named those with whom she wished to play at black-gammon, piquet, or casino. It was not customary to play for money when strangers were of the party. When the Empress played her game of piquet with any person of her household the stakes were three francs for each counter. A round game was sometimes played, in which she condescended to join; she then allowed any stake that was proposed, because she held the bank in her hands. Her great delight was to win from M. Pierlot, the Comptroller of her household, who was a wretched player, and who took no pains to conceal his bad temper, which Josephine greatly enjoyed, and which consequently afforded amusement to all the company. Madame d'Arberg also named the persons who were to play with her; the remainder of the card-parties were made up at random. The younger members of the company generally withdrew to the adjoining saloon, containing a pianoforte and a harp, and indulged in music or in dancing. We sometimes were so boisterous, and broke out into such immoderate fits of laughter, that Madame d'Arberg wanted to send us word that we should restrain our noisy mirth, but Josephine would not allow it, and assured her that our unrestrained joy had the effect of cheering her spirits and amusing her. At eleven o'clock we removed to a small saloon, where a tea-table was laid. After this collation the visitors withdrew; the Empress remained another hour in conversation with us. This colloquial intercourse afforded the best opportunity of judging of the extent of her wit, and of the goodness of her heart; she joined in it in the most unreserved manner. At times she suddenly stopped short in the midst of an interesting narrative, saying that everything she told us

was repeated to the Emperor, a circumstance which was exceedingly painful to her feelings. In fact, he was informed of every word of these conversations.<sup>1</sup>

At midnight she withdrew to her apartment, and we retired to our rooms, where we still kept up our frolicsome mirth.

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1 Her suspicions did not alight upon any one of the society in particular; certain it is, however, that some person was directed to act as a spy over her actions. I do not believe she ever discovered who was the informer.

## CHAPTER XVIII

THE PALACE OF NAVARRE BEFORE AND AFTER THE REVOLUTION—OUR ESTABLISHMENT AT THAT PALACE—WE PLAY ENIGMATIC GAMES—ENVY AND CAPRICIOUSNESS OF THE COMEDIANS—THE TOWN OF EVREUX INVITES THE HOUSEHOLD OF THE EMPRESS TO A BALL—MADAME DE RÉMUSAT—ANECDOTES RELATED BY THE EMPRESS RESPECTING THE MARÉCHALE LEFEBVRE—STORY OF THE LOSS OF A LARGE DIAMOND

It was said that Navarre was before the Revolution the most delightful spot imaginable. Its immense park was surrounded and overlooked by the fine forest of Evreux; beautiful cascades were formed by fine clear water running in canals; part of it had received a meandering direction for the purpose of producing a charming river in the private park called *l'Île d'Amour*. A temple of a splendid but rather Gothic architecture presented elegant internal decorations. Enormous pillars of blue crystal, in which a countless number of lights were introduced, exhibited the most fanciful and pleasing light; paintings in fresco of the most celebrated masters and splendid statues completed the illusion, and rendered that spot worthy of the god to whom it was dedicated.

The Empress had to incur a heavy expense in its repairs. It had suffered, like every other place, from

revolutionary inroads. Traces of its ravages were to be seen in all directions; and after the lapse of fifty years this temple was left a mere ruin. Its destruction had been accelerated by means far more effectual than the progress of time. When I saw it, it had undergone repair, but no idea could be formed of its charms without referring to the tradition of its first origin.

Her majesty's attention was chiefly directed to the object of removing the impediments to the unobstructed flowing of the water, which, having been neglected, had become stagnant, and occasioned autumnal fevers. At the time I speak of, the water was so perfectly clear that it was necessary to stir it for the purpose of fishing.

A long and magnificent avenue led to what was called *the palace*, which, properly speaking, was nothing more than a hunting pavilion, far too confined for the Empress, whose apartment was small and incomplete; the hall of the guards was alone suitable to a princely habitation. It received the light from a large cupola of the same elevation as the palace. The apartments which we occupied opened into the corridor surrounding this cupola; owing to their distribution they were exceedingly uncomfortable and cold, having no antechamber to separate them from the corridor.

The footmen were huddled together in a kind of loft; an inconvenience which did not prevent Josephine from ascending to it when anyone was confined by illness. She never failed to make her appearance whenever a fellow-creature was in bodily pain, and never quitted the bedside of the patient without leaving behind her some token of her generosity.

Her majesty ordered an augmentation to the stables;

it was surrounded by infectious marshes, the unhealthiness of which was removed by the care she bestowed to the subject; in so doing she conferred a benefit upon the surrounding country.

We took it one day into our heads to play enigmatic games. The Empress ordered her dresses to be placed at our disposal: we were therefore provided with splendid costumes; this very splendour was probably the cause of our soon feeling a disrelish for this kind of amusement, which unquestionably derives its chief attraction from the oddness and ridiculous cut of an extemporary and unexpected garb.

We no sooner had free access to feathers, flowers, cashmere shawls, and dresses covered with gold, than we aimed at embellishments in our attire; pretensions and coquettishness were substituted for mirth; everyone ambitioned to act the principal part in the performance, which had been prepared long beforehand, and which exclusively engrossed our attention since the morning; vexation was felt at being disappointed; and had we continued, I am confident that we should have exhibited all those petty squabbles which break up the harmony of performers. Fortunately for us, Madame d'Arberg discovered that we damaged many fine dresses; the waiting-maids complained, and the permission was retracted, a circumstance which alone prevented our falling out with each other. Wounded self-love has often disturbed the peace of kingdoms; what wonder, then, if it should have spread disunion in a circle of women?

The town of Evreux invited the household of the Empress to a ball, which took place at the theatre. We all accepted the invitation, with the exception of her

majesty; Madame d'Arberg and my mother remained to play cards with her. The Empress insisted that the young ladies should be well dressed; she sent for Mdles. de Mackau, de Castellane, and myself, in order to examine our dresses; as the weather was intensely cold, she lent us magnificent velvet pelisses, lined with furs of the most costly description.

When I found myself in a carriage drawn by six horses, in a box decorated with red velvet, invited to dance with the first authorities of the town, it only required an effort of imagination to make me consider myself a personage of some importance; fortunately for me I recollected my scanty fortune, and the humble hack in which I was wont to ride; my weak intellect, being reminded of the truth by the painful comparison, was no longer bewildered by those outward signs of transitory grandeur.

The life we led at Navarre was very congenial to my feelings: we generally enjoyed ourselves to such a degree that we felt no desire to quit this place. Nevertheless, the *forms of Court* often crept into our retirement. Petty intrigues and jealousies had their free range; an additional smile bestowed by her majesty had the effect of distorting many a countenance; but the gracious air of command was soon resumed, until a fresh favour brought on the return of a clouded aspect. A *camellia*, at that time a very scarce flower, which was given to me by Josephine, brought upon me the enmity of a person, who has ever since retained that feeling. She is no longer of this world; I must therefore suppress all allusion to this trivial occurrence which had a great influence over my fate at a later period, since that lady, who had no rival-

ship to fear, had felt such an apprehension of me as to endeavour to alienate Josephine's friendly sentiments; an attempt in which she unhappily succeeded.

Many persons of that society have remained strangers to the feelings of envy; amongst these was Madame de Rémusat, whose loss was so universally deplored. To a superior mind, and the most elevated ideas (proofs of which have been afforded by her remarkable work),<sup>1</sup> she united a noble and generous heart: if any favour was to be asked of her majesty, Madame de Rémusat was always the person applied to. No doubt was entertained of her taking upon herself to present the petition of any one in distress, and warmly pleading the cause confided to her. Her long-trying attachment to Josephine gave her an influence which she exerted for the advantage of others. I have known her to obtain in the course of a week three or four favours, which others had declined to solicit of the Empress.

*"There is no danger," she said, "of annoying or importuning Josephine when we enable her to relieve the distressed; I have, therefore, no merit in applying to her."*

In this manner she sought to lessen the merit of what she did. A sense of gratitude has already inspired the idea of giving publicity to her good actions; and she has found their just reward in the esteem of all those who were acquainted with her.

The Empress told us of the weariness to which she was a prey at the Tuileries, and of the pleasure she felt when any circumstance occurred to interrupt the fatiguing Court ceremony to which she was chained down. She related to us on that subject a few anecdotes concerning

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1 "Essay on the Education of Women."

the Maréchale Lefebvre, who was so well known for the coarseness of her manners.

On the night of a Court circle she made her appearance loaded with diamonds, pearls, flowers, silver, gold, &c., as she said "she wished to have ornaments *of all sorts* on her person." M. de Beaumont, the chamberlain on duty, announced Madame la Maréchale Lefebvre. The Emperor came to receive her, and said,—

"How do you do, Madame la Maréchale, *Duchess of Dantzic*." (A title which M. de Beaumont had forgotten.)

She turned quickly round upon the latter with a laugh, and said aloud,—

*"That's a slap at you, my lad."*

The reader will readily imagine what a fund of mirth this observation occasioned, and how great was the embarrassment of M. de Beaumont, a man of the most polished good breeding and of a reserve which he deemed of importance to the dignity of his office. An immoderate fit of laughter caught the whole assembly, whose looks were rivetted upon him. It was impossible, for some moments, to restore the gravity becoming a public reception; and the Emperor was the first to enjoy this strange sally.

The Maréchale went one day to visit some hotels, with the intention of purchasing a residence. She came to an apartment surrounded with bookcases, lined with green silk.

"What's that?" she enquired of the porter.

"Madame la Maréchale, it is a library."

"*What's the good of it?*"

"To hold books, madam."

"*Well-a-day, what trash! My husband don't read;*

*no more don't I ; so I'll make this my fruit-room ; I can't do better."*

The apartment was accordingly converted to that purpose ; in point of smell it was not improved by the change.

She came one day to breakfast with the Empress, who was at the Tuileries, and was surrounded by the ladies of her Court. Her majesty found the Maréchale in an agitated state, which was not usual with her ; and with that graceful manner so natural to Josephine she kindly enquired what was the cause of her uneasiness and distress of mind.

"Oh, madam, 'tis a long story, which I have no objection to tell your majesty ; but you must first pack off those women (the ladies of honour), who are looking at me, giggling all the while."

"Ladies, will you be kind enough to step into the adjoining saloon," said Josephine to them, under the impression that the case in point was some family secret.

"Now then, Duchess, relate to me your troubles."

"I haven't any more troubles, madam ; but you see I am still flurried all over with a misfortune that happened to me this morning."

"How is this ? has your son been fighting ? "

"He is not such a fool."

"The Marshal, then ? "

"'Tis nothing about him ; I thought I had lost *my large diamond*. I was certain I had left it in my room ; when I came home it was gone. I asked those who *was* there ; they told me *as how* none but the scrubber of my floors was in it. He was in the saloon which he was just finishing ; I *makes* him come in, and I *tells* him,

‘Scoundrel,’ I *says*, ‘you have my large diamond; I must have it because I *values* it; ’tis the first that Lefebvre gave me; come, out with it, and I shan’t do you anything.’ My lad says he hasn’t got it. He was a black; I couldn’t see if he blushed; but I still *says* to him that I want my large diamond; and I *orders* him to empty his pockets. ‘Nothing in my hands, nothing in my pockets,’ *says* he. ‘Well then, scoundrel, strip.’ He hesitates; but I am not to be led in this manner, not I indeed. ‘Strip, you rogue; stark naked I desire, or I *calls* my *servants* to kill you.’ At last he strips as *naked as a worm*, and I found my diamond. Here it is. A fine lady, *howsoever*, would have lost it.”<sup>1</sup>

The following trait does honour to her character, and inspires a friendly feeling for a woman who has been such a source of mirth to others far less deserving of regard. Madame de Walsh-Sérent was on duty near her majesty; she was suddenly startled by a slap on the shoulder, and a hoarse voice crying out to her,—

“Good morrow, *gossip*.”

Astonished at this familiar tone, to which she was so little accustomed, Madame de Sérent turned round, and recognised the Maréchale.

“Madam, I——”

“Pooh! pooh! no fine speeches for me! come, now, don’t you know me again. Before I was a great lady I was a plain nurse. I nursed your good man; you *was*

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<sup>1</sup> That large diamond she valued so much was since sold by her with many others, in order to erect a monument to the Duke of Dantzic, who left her in circumstances as limited as they are creditable to his character. His grave is every day visited by the Duchess, who is inconsolable for the loss of her husband and of her son.

kind to me, and godmother to one of my babes; how shouldn't I recollect it! Give us a hug."<sup>1</sup>

It must be owned that there is great credit due to the woman who can thus court the renewal of an acquaintance which would be mortifying to the self-love of so many others; and that such a good-natured feeling is far preferable to the insolent haughtiness of so many upstarts, whose impertinence more forcibly calls to mind what they formerly were. That excellent woman proved herself a tender mother and a devoted wife; she is beloved by all her inferiors, towards whom she evinces an unwearied kindness of disposition.

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1 The above language is as close a translation of the original as possible.—*Translator*.

## CHAPTER XIX

A NEW YEAR'S DAY AT NAVARRE—SINGULAR LOTTERY—  
ENVY OF THE LADIES OF THE HOUSEHOLD—M. DE  
BARRAL, ARCHBISHOP OF TOURS — ILL HUMOUR OF  
MADAME GAZANI—ANECDOTE RESPECTING THAT LADY,  
WHO GOES TO COMPLAIN TO THE EMPEROR—WITTY  
SAYINGS OF MADAME DE SOUZA—PORTRAIT OF THE  
READER OF THE EMPRESS—CONDUCT OF JOSEPHINE  
AFTER MADAME GAZANI'S DISGRACE

NEW Year's Day came to pass; the Empress announced that instead of giving new year's gifts she should have a lottery of jewels. The whole household was impatient to know what the wheel of chance, *aided* by her majesty, would procure for them. M. de Barral, Archbishop of Tours, a very witty but absent man, did not perceive how the lots were drawn. The first was for him; it was a splendid ruby ring, surrounded with diamonds; he was delighted with it, and repeated with laughable candour that this happened very well, as he was at liberty to wear it, whilst he should have been puzzled with a necklace or earrings, which he should have been under the necessity of exchanging. He did not perceive that the Empress *lent her assistance* to the wheel, until two of the ladies of honour had received articles similar to each other for their share; the chamberlains pins of the same kind, &c. As Madame Gazani

only held the office of reader, she could not have a present like those of the ladies of honour without greatly offending their pride, as they considered themselves of a far more elevated rank. With a view to soften down as much as possible the distinction she was unable to overlook in this case between ladies who were all treated alike in her society, and knowing as she did how self-love is prone to become ruffled at Court, and with what pertinacity one is apt to adhere to the prerogatives of place, the Empress gave her a beautiful bracelet of large coloured stones set in diamonds, which conveyed the name of *Josephine* to the mind. The other ladies were presented with splendid brilliants in the form of crosses.

Notwithstanding this mark of attention, which ought not to have been lost upon Madame Gazani, as it shewed her how disposed the Empress was to *forget*, she was greatly displeased at being treated differently from the rest of her majesty's household. For our own parts, as we held no situation, we had no right to expect any gifts; nevertheless she presented us with some charming ones. I place the greatest value on her majesty's hair enclosed in a medallion, which fell to my lot. Nothing could be more acceptable to me; the medallion and chain were of fine pearls. I was under the necessity of disposing of them, but I will never part with that portion of the present which I prized above all the rest.

Since I have adverted to Madame Gazani, I must enter into further details respecting that charming woman, who has made so much noise in the world. She was a Genoese, but the daughter of a dancer attached to the principal theatre in that city. The Emperor in one of his journeys was captivated by her lovely face, and promised to procure places for herself as well as for her

husband. He made her come to Paris, where she was immediately appointed reader to the Empress, and enjoyed the sovereign's favour. Her husband was sent as Receiver-General to Evreux.

The new favourite claimed to rank on a footing with the ladies of honour. Madame de la Rochefoucauld endeavoured to resist many encroachments, such as her seating herself on the same bench in the chapel of the palace. Madame Gazani went to complain to the Emperor, who gave orders that her wish should be complied with. There was no resisting his commands.

She was tall, and, although rather lean, was remarkable for her graceful deportment. She had a brown, though sometimes heated complexion; but her countenance was so captivating that any alteration in her exterior appearance would have disparaged her. She had the finest eyes I ever saw; they gave a sudden expression to her countenance when she spoke or listened to the conversation of others.<sup>1</sup>

Madame Gazani had not pretty hands; she was careful, therefore, to wear gloves on almost every occasion. Her white teeth were constantly displayed to view by her small side-laugh, which added charms to her physiognomy. She danced well, but with rather too much pretensions; and her feet had nothing to recommend them. Without being a connoisseur in music, she sang very prettily some detached pieces which she studied beforehand. A great knowledge of the world supplied the place of wit; and if her conversation had nothing to captivate, she pleased by the

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<sup>1</sup> Madame de Souza, whose witty sayings are so numerous, pretended that *they resembled the clouds, as they indicated whatever the imagination most fancied.*

softness of her voice and the pretty expressions to which her lovely mouth gave utterance.

Two months after her arrival, the Emperor, fearing that he should be domineered by a woman, as it has often happened to him, broke off all intercourse with her, and entering abruptly into Josephine's apartment:

"*Send away Madame Gazani*," he said; "she must return to Italy."

"No, sire, I will keep her near me; you must not throw into despair a young woman whom you have torn away from every duty. Besides, I may perhaps be, very shortly, as unhappy as herself" (the divorce was then whispered about in conversation). "We will mingle our tears; she will understand me. I insist, therefore, on keeping her; this will unquestionably be a bar to your majesty's ever afterwards meeting her."

"Well, do as you please; but let me never see her again."

From that moment Josephine loaded her with kindness. Her majesty related the above scene to my mother, and she acknowledged that she considered it as some degree of happiness in that dreadful moment of her own cruel separation to have near her a person who heard the Emperor's name mentioned with the same emotion of painful pleasure which she herself experienced in speaking of him, and who shared in her sentiments.

When I knew Madame Gazani, her heart was a prey to an attachment which ought to have effaced every recollection of her love for the Emperor; nevertheless, she constantly spoke of him, and I think that vanity made her regret having lost the conquest of the ruler of so many sovereigns. I do not believe she was gifted

with much tenderness; it had been blunted by the constant adulation paid to her. M. de P——, who had the advantage of a handsome countenance, the most charming temper, and a large fortune, which enabled him to give a free loose to his feeling of gallantry for the woman he deeply loved, was often extremely wretched in her company. She was very coquettish, and notwithstanding the mental distress she caused to the man whom she affected to be attached to, and who had sacrificed many brilliant establishments for her sake, she neglected no opportunity of displaying all her means of captivation. She pretended to make light of a grief which M. de P—— attempted to conceal, but which was evident in all his actions. He has since found a charming wife, worthy of repaying him for all the sorrows of the time I allude to.

As Madame Gazani only aimed at enslaving men, she was gentle and complaisant when she happened to be alone with women of whom she had no reason to be jealous; but if by chance she fancied for a moment that there existed the slightest intention of rivalling her, her temper suddenly changed, and she became rude and impertinent. These occasions were of rare occurrence; she was therefore very agreeable company.

Her husband, an excellent man, was compelled to submit to the will of the sovereign, who, in case of resistance, would have found means of reaching him wherever he went; and he suffered from the irksomeness of his position without departing from the kindest attentions towards his wife. He trusted that this continued attachment on his part would restore him to her affections, to which his valuable qualities so justly entitled him.

## CHAPTER XX

THE VICEROY AT NAVARRE—PRESENTS MADE BY HIM—  
HIS PORTRAIT—FREQUENT ASSASSINATIONS AT MILAN—  
MEANS ADOPTED FOR DIMINISHING THEIR FREQUENCY  
—QUEEN HORTENSE—MADAME DE VILLENEUVE

THE viceroy came frequently to Navarre, and his arrival was a source of general satisfaction. The gentlemen of our society felt confident that the conversation would be doubly interesting by the recital of the glorious engagements in which he had taken so active a share. The ladies were rejoiced at the prospect of the delightful parties he always made up in order to please them, and of a variety of small presents offered by him with a grace which greatly enhanced their value.

It was then the custom to wear a *charivari*. Prince Eugene made his appearance with a provision of those pretty trifles, which he distributed at the billiard-table and at cards. Wishing to escape the thanks of the company, he invariably contrived to lose, so that the winner secured a wished-for toy, and last, not least, a small triumph of self-love, to which no woman is insensible.

It is impossible to display greater amiability, instruction, or good nature, than the viceroy, in his intercourse with society; he took as much pains to win general favour as a private individual might have done

who aimed at courting applause. A sworn enemy to etiquette, he endeavoured, as much as possible, to fly from it, and forbade the ushers to announce him in order to spare us the trouble of rising as often as he came in.

“It is quite enough,” he said, “that I should be compelled to submit to all the painful consequences of authority when I am at Milan; let me at least be allowed to enjoy myself here. *The kingly task is a severe one indeed when we have not been trained to it.*” I have seen him at Malmaison, in a dreadful shower of rain, preferring to pass through the garden on his way to the gallery rather than submit to that announcement of his name, for which he felt so much reluctance.

His handsome and soft countenance became wonderfully animated when he spoke of his campaigns. He had a dignified and elegant deportment, and his whole person would have been faultless were it not for a wretched set of teeth, which completely disfigured him. He never came without performing a multitude of charitable acts; every countenance, therefore, was beaming with delight at beholding him. Josephine noticed this circumstance with a mother's pride. He was unacquainted with music, but he sang *il buffo* in a pleasing manner; he possessed the instinct and taste of that art. After hearing once or twice the part he was to perform in a duet or a trio, it became quite familiar to him, and it never escaped his memory. No one ever displayed more filial or paternal tenderness.<sup>1</sup> He never could refrain from

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1 It is said that he had several mistresses, but he so effectually concealed his intrigues that the vice-queen never had an opportunity of discovering them. He often declared that he would have sacrificed every woman in the world for the one whom he cherished above all others, and whose admirable conduct and good qualities afforded him such unalloyed happiness.

shedding tears when he alluded to the period of his mother's divorce, which he termed the *most dreadful moment of his life*.

The viceroy always wore about him the portraits of his children and of the vice-queen, painted by Isabey, and suspended from a watch-chain. They formed a collection of beautiful countenances.

He related to us that when he was appointed viceroy, not a day passed at Milan without the occurrence of some assassination. The authors of these atrocious acts of revenge, which were considered as mere trifles, were seldom prosecuted. Each powerful family had hired assassins in their employ, who perpetrated the most appalling crimes. Many wise laws were laid down by the viceroy, such as a general prohibition, under pain of imprisonment and of a very heavy fine, either to carry, purchase, or sell any other than clasped knives. When an assassin happened to be arrested, he always pretended to have acted under the influence of the moment, and without premeditation. He could no longer urge this excuse if he had to open the knife for the purpose of committing the deed. People of doubtful character were frequently searched in the open streets.

The viceroy acquired a still more elevated glory than that which he had been accustomed to reap on the field of battle; the glory of diminishing the frequency of those frightful accidents which, by degrees, became as rare at Milan as in any other country. His just and benevolent administration secured to him the warm affections of a people who are seldom much attached to their sovereigns. His charming and gentle wife appeared in the light of

an angel entrusted to watch over the happiness of one whose attention was wholly bent upon securing that of others. The admirable conduct of the vice-queen has contributed as much to her fame as her unparalleled beauty.

When Prince Eugene was at Navarre, no public reading took place. In fine weather the company went to fish in the sheets of water of the delightful garden attached to the palace. The lady who caught the greatest number of fish, and whose booty weighed *heaviest*, received a prize from the viceroy, and another from each person of the company. On our return to the palace we sent our booty to the cooks, with orders to have it immediately fried. They always murmured at being disturbed from their work, in order to attend to the cooking of some wretched fish which they would hardly have placed before the kitchen-maids; but his imperial highness was so delighted with such extempore repasts that they were renewed every day at the hour of four, and we all agreed in finding our fish far preferable to the choicest dishes of her majesty's dinner; our repast was, at all events, infinitely more cheerful than that meal.

When the rain confined us within doors the billiard-table was the place of resort, and, as I have already mentioned, trifling toys were the winner's reward. The men were excluded from the competition. Music was always performed at night, and the viceroy took part in it.

The Queen of Holland was on a visit at the palace when he joined us, but as it did not afford sufficient accommodation for every one, many ladies of the house-

hold had to give up their apartments, and we slept three or four in the same room. The Queen was less cheerful than her brother, a circumstance to be ascribed, I believe, to her extremely debilitated state of health. When she came the dress previously allowed was laid aside; the men resumed their places about the Court, and we had to appear in full dress as if to attend a ball. The presence of the Queen never failed to occasion some restraint, because she was accompanied by ladies who always adhered to Court forms, and would have deemed it derogatory to their dignity to act otherwise. We must except from the number Madame de Villeneuve, whose gentleness and amiability of disposition were in perfect harmony with her lovely countenance.

When the Queen was free from pain she sang romances with considerable animation, and condescended to point out to us the manner of singing them. I have been less in the habit of meeting her than her brother, as she was mostly confined to her apartment, and had to go through a course of medicine which she could not depart from without augmenting her sufferings.

## CHAPTER XXI

GRAND DINNER AT THE MAYOR OF EVREUX—BIRTH OF  
THE KING OF ROME—GENERAL REJOICING IN PARIS—  
THE VICEROY RELATES WHAT HE HAD SEEN AT THE  
EMPEROR'S PALACE—AFFECTED AIRS OF THE QUEEN OF  
NAPLES AND OF PRINCESS PAULINE—A PAGE ARRIVES  
FROM THE EMPEROR—NOTE FROM NAPOLEON—GENE-  
ROSITY OF THE EMPRESS—DEPARTURE OF THE VICEROY  
—THE EMPRESS GIVES A FÊTE—ADVENTURE OF M. DE  
CLERMONT-TONNERE

THE whole household was engaged to a dinner given by the Mayor of Evreux, and repaired to the invitation, leaving as usual Madame d'Arberg with her majesty, whom she never quitted.

In the midst of a splendid repast, there entered an *employé* of the prefecture, bringing a letter for the mayor; his countenance sparkled with delight, and he exclaimed, at the very threshold of the apartment, "*The King of Rome is born!*" This was on the 20th of March, 1811.

It is beyond my power adequately to express the sensation created by these words upon the minds of the guests, who, hastily rising from their seats, and approaching the bearer of this important news, questioned him upon the event, and upon the effect it had produced in Paris.

Whilst the mayor hurried off to attend to the instruction he had just received, M. Portalès issued his orders for the carriages to be got in readiness to return immediately to Navarre, to which place the Prefect had dispatched a courier. No time was lost in preparing the equipages; nevertheless, when we took our departure the town was already illuminated, the bonfires were lighted, the guns were firing, and the bells ringing to communicate far and near that the wishes of France had been fulfilled.

It is an undoubted fact that the most opposite opinions gave way at that time to the necessity felt of seeing an heir to the man, who, by means of his victorious sword, had raised the Crown of France from the torrent of blood which covered it. His splendid triumphs had restored to Frenchmen that rank among nations which they had lost owing to the frightful crimes perpetrated by a part of the population. By dint of victories the errors in which the majority had taken so small a share had been nearly expiated. If the Emperor failed to secure the affections of all, he was at least entitled to gratitude for having repaired so much mischief, for having restored a code of laws, and re-established a religious worship which held out the flattering prospect of a complete reconciliation with a God who had so often been insulted by odious bacchanalia and disgraceful prostitutions of holy ceremonies. The emigrants had returned in great numbers when they saw Napoleon at the head of the Government. They not only enjoyed the happiness of revisiting their fine native land, which they loved the more since they had had an opportunity of *comparing* it with foreign countries; they even accepted of places and

of military service in the hope of being useful to their country, from which they had so long been exiled ! The return of the Bourbons, whose memory was still cherished, appeared impossible. They remained in a state of calm tranquillity, at a distance from the theatre of their misfortunes, which were considered by all to be beyond the reach of remedy ; compelled to renounce the prospect of being governed by them, all parties wished to retain for their Sovereign the man who by dint of glory had succeeded in restoring to France the blessings of internal tranquillity.

Sincere, therefore, was the general rejoicing at the birth of the King of Rome ; I shared in the hope entertained that this event would have the effect of consolidating that state of repose which France so ardently longed for. Brought up in the turmoil of our cruel Revolution, I dreaded the renewal of those frightful civil wars which had made so deep an impression upon my parents ; but I confess that my affections for Josephine made me experience a violent emotion of anger when I recollected that the woman who held her place was completely happy. Her very happiness increased my aversion for her.

Being imperfectly acquainted at this time with Josephine's elevation of soul, her absolute abnegation of self, and her anxiety for the Emperor's happiness, I felt persuaded that she would to a certain extent exhibit the character of *a woman*, and that a slight glance at the past would make her bitterly regret that she was not the mother of this child, whose birth had been hailed with general acclamation. My judgment was that of a frivolous, superficial worldling, only intent upon *the*

*MARIE-PAULINE BONAPARTE, PRINCESS  
BORGHÈSE*

*After the painting by Robert Lefebvre*



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*important cares* which the preparations for a ball are wont to create.

On my arrival at the palace, I discovered the true character of the woman who was for a long time the tender companion of her sovereign, was often his adviser, and at all times his friend. On alighting from the carriage, my ideas underwent a total change; I perceived so much satisfaction upon every countenance, that I felt at no loss to guess the real sentiments of the Empress; who would have ventured to smile had Josephine's mind assumed a serious turn?

We had scarcely entered the apartment when her majesty asked if any particulars had been received :

"I regret being so far from Paris," she said at every moment. "Were I at Malmaison, I might receive intelligence in a much shorter space of time! I am well pleased to find that the painful sacrifice I made to France has proved of some advantage, and that her future prospects are now secured. How great must be the Emperor's delight! I am only grieved at one circumstance, which is, that his happiness should not have been made known to me by himself. He has, however, so many orders to issue, so many congratulations to receive! Ladies, there must be a fête here as well as elsewhere, to solemnize the fulfilment of this long-wished-for event. I will give you a ball. As the apartments are not spacious, I shall give orders for boarding the hall of the guards, as the whole town of Evreux will be anxious to come and rejoice with us, and I never can have too much company on this occasion. Make your preparations, M. Pierlot; send for one of my dresses; for I will not receive company *in a nightcap*; as for you,

gentlemen, I insist for this time that you will appear in full costume."

I have not added anything to what was said by Josephine, though the above words were spoken at various intervals of time. The cheerful countenance of her majesty was open and expanded as she spoke; it is impossible to doubt the sincerity with which she expressed her satisfaction. Never in my opinion did she display in a more brilliant light how well entitled she was to the exalted rank to which she had been raised.

The viceroy arrived the next morning, and furnished us all the details we so anxiously expected. He told us how uneasy the Emperor had been respecting the state of the Empress, who was in imminent danger during the pains of her most painful labour; he never ceased recommending to the celebrated Dubois that he should treat her as he would the *wife of a citizen of the Rue Saint-Denis*; and at the moment when it was feared that either the mother or the child must be sacrificed, he exclaimed: "*Save my wife! the rest is to me of minor consequence!*" Unquestionably, Prince Eugene would not have related in the presence of Josephine the above fact, which so clearly proved Napoleon's love for Maria Louise, had he not known that the latter had *partly* sacrificed her existence to the wants of the state, and even wished for an heir to the throne she had relinquished with the bitterest anguish, since she was parting from the man who possessed her affections, although no feeling of disappointed ambition had contributed to heighten her regret. Many writers have appeared to doubt this truth; but it is important to assert it, as it gives to her majesty an additional claim upon our sorrow for her loss. Those who

have written that she regretted *the Emperor* much more than *the husband*, must be perfect strangers to a woman's feelings; besides which they had never approached the woman of whom they formed so unjust an opinion. Let us, then, forgive an error on their part, which it is our pleasing task to correct.

The viceroy related with a fund of humour the affected airs which he had seen the Queen of Naples and Princess Pauline assume during the night previous to the birth of the King of Rome. All the family had assembled in the apartments adjoining the bedroom, together with the high dignitaries appointed to be witnesses of the event. The lamentations and cries of the Empress were distinctly heard. The Princesses had the windows thrown open at every moment under pretence that they wanted air, and felt sick at being obliged to remain so near the spot; their weak nerves were overcome by their sister's sufferings!

"All this affected anguish," added Eugene, "could not deceive anyone, since the fresh countenances of those ladies sufficiently attested that they had never been in better health. They displayed an expression much nearer akin to excessive vexation than to grief. They no doubt imagined their influence over their brother would greatly diminish, and that of the Empress would proportionably increase. Such was the cause of their nervous attacks; the feelings of *sisters* laid dormant at that moment, and they assumed far too much the sentiments of *queens*."

The utmost reliance may be placed upon these details which had made too forcible an impression upon my mind ever to be forgotten.

The viceroy assured Josephine that the Emperor had spoken to him as follows, on his taking leave:

"Eugene, you are going to see your mother; tell her that I am certain she will rejoice more than anyone else at my happiness. I should already have written to her, had I not been wrapped up in the delight of looking at my son. I cannot be moved from his side except by indispensable duties; I will this night perform the most pleasing of all by writing to Josephine."

Accordingly, at eleven o'clock, just as we were about to take tea, we heard a great bustle in the ante-chambers; the doors of the apartments were opened with a loud noise; the folding doors of the gallery, where the Empress had remained, were suddenly thrown back by the door-keeper, who exclaimed, "*A message from the Emperor.*" The Empress and the viceroy went up to a young page of pleasing countenance, but seemingly much fatigued; this was, I believe, M. de Saint-Hilaire. The Empress recognized him, though she had not seen him for two years. Anxious to afford him time to recover himself, she addressed several questions to him with that graceful air which pervaded all her actions.

Being the bearer of a letter in the Emperor's handwriting, the young man was so apprehensive of losing it that he thrust it down the side-pocket of his coat, and had some difficulty in finding it. The Empress perceived his embarrassment, and continued to converse with him on matters purely personal to himself. She expressed the sincere regret she felt at the death of his uncle, who had been killed in Spain; at last the letter made its appearance. Her majesty withdrew with the viceroy for the purpose of perusing and replying to it, after

having ordered supper to be prepared for M. de Saint-Hilaire, whom she was anxious to detain until the morrow, in order to afford him time to recover from his fatigues; but he replied that he would take his departure as soon as he should receive her majesty's answer to the letter, because he was commissioned to communicate the important news to her imperial highness the vice-queen.<sup>1</sup> He had performed the journey in six hours, riding at full gallop, the distance from Paris to Navarre being twenty-eight leagues.

The Empress returned to the apartment half an hour after she had left it; her eyes were much swollen, and the viceroy appeared greatly affected. We were apprehensive of putting any questions respecting the contents of that letter. Josephine guessed our curiosity, and, condescending to gratify it, said that she would read to us what so nearly concerned her, and first shewed the written page upon which were penned eight or ten lines; part of it was covered with ink-blots. I do not exactly recollect the beginning; but this was, *word for word*, the last phrase of the letter:

"This child, conjointly with *our Eugene*, will secure my happiness and that of France."

"It is impossible to be more amiable," observed the Empress, "or to make greater efforts to soften the bitterness which that event would impart to my mind if I were not so sincerely attached to the Emperor. The connec-

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<sup>1</sup> It happened otherwise. M. de Bearn, the chamberlain, was entrusted with this mission, which had been solicited by several persons. He returned quite enraptured with the grace and beauty of the vice-queen. He received from her a splendid snuff-box, with her portrait set in large diamonds.

tion of my son with his own is well worthy of the man who, when he pleases, is the most engaging of all."

We agreed, in fact, in considering that phrase as a truly happy one. The woman to whom it was addressed was worthy of appreciating its value.

When M. de Saint-Hilaire came to receive her majesty's orders, "This," she said, "is for the Emperor, and that for yourself," handing him her answer to the letter, and a small red morocco case containing a diamond pin of the value of *five thousand francs*. She had ordered it in the event of the birth of a daughter being announced to her, and had intended one of the value of 12,000 francs for the birth of a son; but the viceroy dissuaded her by observing that such a present was of far too great a value; it would be said that she wanted to make a display of her unbounded generosity; she should therefore bring it within limits, and do no more than what was correct and proper.

On the occasion of this visit she presented the viceroy with a splendid set of sapphires of the largest size, surrounded with brilliants, which she destined to be sent by him to the vice-queen, who had been lately delivered of a son. Thus it is that I have often seen her part with many articles of great value for the sake of her children; a proof of the falsehood of the assertion that she was very reluctant to part with any of her jewels. She had ceased to carry them on her person; and I only saw her with brilliants on two occasions during a period of five months; at the ball which I shall presently advert to, and at Malmaison, when the grand Duke of Wurtzbourg came to dine there. On other days she wore a necklace and ear-rings of fine large pearls for her only ornament.

Her toilet was particularly choice and elegant though usually free from display, and consisted of tulle and crape dresses, lined with satin; she seldom wore velvet; small blond caps, or diadems composed of flowers formed her head-dress; she had a preference for the latter instead of the coronation head-dress which she wore on days of ceremony, when she was reigning Empress. It weighed no fewer than *three pounds*, and notwithstanding a very thick piece of velvet placed underneath, her forehead exhibited a deep furrow when she took it off, and it always brought on a headache, a complaint to which she was very subject at the Tuileries, and which she attributed to the life she led there. The Emperor was deaf to her complaints, and made her drive out in an open carriage as a cure for them. She was often under the necessity of alighting from the carriage, and of stretching herself on a bed in some wretched country-inn, where she drank the extract of linden tree and lemon as a remedy. I never saw her affected with that complaint, for she had acquired great corpulency ever since she was at liberty to lead the life that best suited her.

The viceroy took his departure the day after the Empress had received the Emperor's letter. Our minds were thenceforward wholly engaged with the approaching fête, which I anticipated with more pleasure than anyone else, so great was my passion for dancing.

The palace was filled with workmen employed in flooring the hall of the guards, ornamenting the apartments, placing draperies, tables, side-boards, &c.; the tradespeople came in regular succession with provisions of all kinds, bandboxes of flowers, feathers, crapes, &c.

The *femmes de chambre* were overloaded with work, and in the most wretched temper; there was a general clamour and confusion throughout the palace; the stewards especially were incessantly at work to provide for everything; we were employed in trying on our robes; the gentlemen were busy about their Court dresses. Many had forgotten to wear them; others had to learn their tasks.

M. Pierlot afforded us much enjoyment by the awkwardness of his appearance in a velvet coat embroidered with gold; his hat and feathers sunk deep over his eyebrows, like a *classical* nightcap, now discarded by men of *romantic ideas*; the enormous tie of his white satin scarf was placed in the very middle of his chest, his sword was constantly entangled with our dresses, and he cut the most ludicrous figure I ever saw. His appearance presented a remarkable contrast to M. Portalès, who exhibited in his chivalric costume that elegance which is alone calculated to grace it. Everyone, in short, had his own business to mind, and the palace was a complete scene of jostling and confusion.

The Empress had summoned to this fête her cousin, Henry de Tascher, to whom she was particularly attached, and who had a claim upon her affection by the amiability of his character and his truly original wit.<sup>1</sup> Being on terms of the most intimate friendship with M. de Clermont-Tonnerre,<sup>2</sup> who was, as well as himself,

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1 He was married to M<sup>lle</sup>. Clari, to whom he had been for a long time attached. A violent attack of colic deprived this charming woman of her husband in the course of twenty-four hours. The universal regret felt for his loss must have contributed to assuage the grief into which she was plunged by so afflicting a privation.

2 Afterwards Minister of War.

an aide-de-camp of King Joseph, he brought him to the fête. The latter was a great favourite of the Empress, owing to his strong likeness to the Emperor at the period I speak of. He was said to be deeply read, and possessed of very general information ; but as he was by no means favoured on the score of fortune, and was lost in the army with a crowd of officers of his own rank, nothing could have led to suppose that he would one day be called to hold one of the highest offices in France. He was of a serious turn of mind, a close observer of mankind, and a great enthusiast of Josephine, who was lavish of her kindness to him.

The Princess of Arenberg, sister of Henry de Tascher, had also come to attend the ball. Married against her will to the Prince of Arenberg, she could never find any happiness at Court, the habits of which were opposed to her inclinations, though she was calculated to grace it by her elegant figure and pleasing countenance. The Creolian indolence of character, which she displayed in a greater degree than anyone I ever saw, gave her an invincible abhorrence for the indispensable duties which it behoved her to submit to. No one could be a more sociable companion or less vain of her unexpected fortune. Nothing could affect her serenity of temper ; it was impossible to be acquainted with and not to love her. Her extreme simplicity of manners afforded a remarkable contrast to the extravagance and pretensions of the other Princesses of the family.<sup>1</sup> She declared that she found no enjoyment anywhere but at Navarre, from the com-

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<sup>1</sup> We should except from the number Princess Stephanie, dowager Grand Duchess of Baden, who is said to exhibit the most amiable character combined with the most exalted rank.

plete absence of etiquette at that residence. It was asserted that she had been deeply enamoured of one of the general officers attached to the Emperor's person ; she had, however, been compelled to contract a brilliant marriage which was never consummated.<sup>1</sup>

Her majesty offered to lend me a set of jewels for that day of rejoicing ; but it occurred to me that I should be afraid to stir if I carried about my person anything of value which did not belong to me ; I therefore declined the offer and resolved, though not without some reluctance, to wear my humble pearl necklace, which would not, at all events, prevent me from dancing. Mdles. de Mackau and de Castellane, who had accepted the proposal made to them by the Empress, would have willingly exchanged places with me during the night. They never failed to enquire at every country dance whether any portion of their jewels was missing, and it was plain to perceive that they hardly ventured to stir from an apprehension of losing any part of it.

At last, to our great satisfaction, the hour tolled for opening the ball ; the ladies of Evreux came flocking to the house ; many of them dressed with all the bad taste peculiar to the province ; but the greater number extremely well attired. The men appeared in full dress as on ordinary occasions.

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1 It has been broken since the Restoration ; she renounced the title of princess to follow the dictates of her heart by marrying the Count de Guित्रy, formerly an equerry of the Empress Josephine. It is said that he does not duly appreciate the sacrifice made in his favour by a charming woman, who brought him a very large fortune, and that he neglects to make her as happy as she deserves to be. I cannot assert that these reports are well founded ; but of this I am certain that Madame de Guित्रy will derive sources of consolation and courage from her maternal duties and her unaffected piety.

As soon as a great part of the company had assembled, the doors communicating with Josephine's apartment were thrown open, and she entered the ball-room in the most elegant attire and resplendent with diamonds. She wore a silver llama dress with a magnificent diadem, and was attended by all the officers and ladies of her household. This *cortège* and her appearance were the same as on the occasion of a fête at the Tuileries. She made the round of the ball-room, addressing some obliging expressions to every lady, and afterwards sat down, when the ball was immediately opened.

M. de Clermont-Tonnerre furnished an episode which excited the risible faculties of everyone except himself. As he was dancing in the presence of her majesty, he strove to do his best, and ventured upon a caper which was attended with unpleasant consequences. M. de Clermont-Tonnerre was a very corpulent man, and he alighted so heavily upon his feet that he forced in the floor, which had been raised to an elevation of six inches above the marble pavement. His foot got so entangled that it was necessary to send for a carpenter to widen the hole in which he had been caught like a fox in a trap. The efforts he made to extricate himself of his own accord had occasioned a swelling in his leg, and he suffered the most acute pain. Unwilling, however, to acknowledge it, he persisted in joining two or three more country dances. It was easy to perceive that he used every exertion to stifle the pain, and to evade the jokes that were constantly kept up at his expense. With a view to annoy him we repeatedly affected to enquire how he found himself; and we did so with an earnestness which had the effect

of ruffling his temper. This was an additional source of mirth to us. I acknowledge we were wrong; but we may be forgiven those little jokes when it is considered that we were then very young and very giddy, and that nothing appeared to us more ridiculous than the sight of a *corpulent old man of thirty* presuming to dance!

“What! is he thirty years of age?” we said to each other. “Why he is quite an old man!” I may venture to assert that not one of us is any longer of that opinion.

A splendid supper was served up at two o'clock in the morning. Three tables were laid, that of the Empress consisted of thirty covers. We all sat down to it with the exception of Madame d'Arberg, who did the honours of the second, and Madame de Ségur of the third table. The principal ladies of the town were invited to Josephine's table. The men supped after us. The company retired at four o'clock. Everything had been arranged with the utmost order, and I am well persuaded that the fête is still fresh in the recollection of the inhabitants of Evreux.

## CHAPTER XXII

SAINT JOSEPH'S DAY AT NAVARRE—FÊTE OF THE EMPRESS  
AT EVREUX—A TE DEUM IS SUNG—JOSEPHINE'S PRIVATE  
SECRETARY—SONGS ANALOGOUS TO THE OCCASION—  
MADAME D'AUDENARDE, MDLLE. DE MACKAU, MADAME  
GAZANI, MDLLE. DE CASTELLANE, MADAME DE COLBERT  
—DEPUTATION FROM THE VILLAGE OF ANNIÈRES—  
MESDAMES DE SÈGUR, DE VIEIL-CASTEL, MM. PIERLOT,  
DESCHAMPS, HOREAU—THE COUNT DE TURPIN'S PACK  
OF CARDS—THE EMPRESS PRESENTS ME WITH A  
CASHMERE SHAWL

I HAVE forgotten to state in what manner Saint Joseph's Day was celebrated at Navarre. The following is the description of a fête which took place when I was with the Empress.

In the early part of the day a deputation of young ladies of the first families in the town of Evreux came to the Palace of Navarre carrying a bust of the Empress under a canopy of flowers. The mayor's daughter recited verses in praise of her majesty, who was so much renowned in the province for her benevolent character.<sup>1</sup> A handsome breakfast was provided for

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<sup>1</sup> Independently of distributing considerable alms, she had endowed a school for poor orphan girls, where they learned to read and write, and were taught arithmetic, sewing and lace-making; her majesty had purchased an extensive plot of ground for building a theatre and for extending the public walk, which was very small and badly planted.

them, which was graced by the presence of her majesty. who made several choice presents to her visitors.

She gave strict injunctions that there should be no public rejoicings at Evreux on the occasion of her fête. Notwithstanding her orders, a *Te Deum* was sung in the cathedral, the town was generally illuminated, and large bonfires were lighted up in the remotest corners as well as in the great square.<sup>1</sup>

M. Deschamps brought us in the evening some stanzas which we were to sing to her majesty. This was the first time of her being at Navarre on such an occasion. She distributed her charity in such abundance in the vicinity that it occurred to some persons of the company to disguise themselves as peasants coming to thank her for her bounty. The remainder sang the verses in their own name. They have never yet been published; the author had composed several pretty ballads; he had been for a long time her majesty's private secretary, was sincerely attached to her, and was much valued by her in return. It has therefore occurred

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<sup>1</sup> Josephine would have been much flattered by those testimonies of attachment, but she felt apprehensive of their exciting the Emperor's displeasure. She knew that Maria Louisa was exceedingly jealous of the affection still retained for her rival. She felt an abhorrence for whatever was calculated to remind her of the woman whose place she occupied. On her way to St. Germain she always took the road to Chatou, in order to avoid passing before Malmaison. This envious disposition must have been the source of much uneasiness to her, for, notwithstanding the favour she enjoyed, she never could succeed in weakening her husband's regard for Josephine; he took no pains to conceal it. He often spoke of her, and neglected no opportunity of extolling the woman whom he had driven to despair through his insatiable ambition. He must have regretted her still more at the period of his misfortunes. Had she lived, he would at least have preserved a friend prepared to endure every sacrifice for his sake.

to me that, although the composition might not possess any claim to particular notice, its apropos entitled it to a place amongst recollections principally consecrated to Josephine's memory.<sup>1</sup>

AIR: *Le Roi des Preux, le fier Roland.*

GENERAL CHORUS.

Comme nos cœurs, joignons nos voix,  
Chantons l'auguste Joséphine.  
Aux fleurs qui naissent sous ses lois  
Sa main ne laisse pas d'épine.  
Partout la suit de ses bienfaits  
Ou l'espérance, ou la mémoire ;  
De Joséphine pour jamais  
Vive le nom ! vive la gloire ! (Bis.)

MADAME D'AUDENARDE MÈRE.

AIR: *Partant pour la Syrie.*

Long-temps d'un fils que j'aime<sup>2</sup>  
J'enviai le bonheur ;  
Mais près de vous, moi-même,  
Rien ne manque à mon cœur.  
Si tous les dons de plaire  
Forment vos attributs,  
Hommage, amour sincère  
Pour vous sont nos tributs. (Bis.)

MADemoiselle DE MACKAU.

AIR: *L'Hymen est un lien charmant.*

Loin d'elle j'ai dû regretter  
Une princesse auguste et chère ;

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1 It is supposed that M. Deschamps drowned himself. After the death of Josephine, his situation became the more distressing as he had undertaken the charge of a young orphan girl. Finding himself without any resources at an age at which it is difficult to create them, he disappeared from his home and never more returned to it.

2 General d'Audénarde was equerry to the Emperor.

Manheim l'adore et la révère,<sup>1</sup>  
 Et j'ai pleuré de la quitter ; (*Bis.*)  
 Mais quand j'ai vu de son image  
 Le modèle dans votre cour,  
 Mon cœur sentit un doux présage ; (*Bis.*)  
 Bientôt les charmes du séjour  
 Ont séché les pleurs du voyage. (*Bis.*)

C'est le bonheur le plus parfait  
 Qui règne ici sous vos auspices ;  
 Mais de vos bontés protectrices  
 Qui mieux que moi ressent l'effet ? (*Bis.*)  
 Le monde et la cour à mon âge  
 N'offraient que des bords inconnus :  
 Mais près de vous je prends courage. (*Bis.*)  
 J'ai votre exemple et vos vertus  
 Pour guide et pour but du voyage. (*Bis.*)

### MADAME GAZANI.

*AIR : A deux époques de la vie.*

Gênes me vit des mon jeune âge  
 Brûler d'être à vous pour jamais.  
 Votre œil distingua mon hommage,<sup>2</sup>  
 Votre cœur combla mes souhaits.  
 A vos bontés, à leur constance,  
 Je dois tout ; et puissent vos yeux  
 Voir ici ma reconnaissance,  
 Comme à Gênes ils ont vu mes vœux.

1 Princess Stephanie, of Baden, to whom she was attached as one of the ladies of her household. With the view of bringing her nearer to M. de Mackau, her father, Josephine requested that she might be allowed to enter her household on the occasion of the divorce, when several of the ladies quitted her for Maria Louisa, a circumstance which greatly indisposed the Emperor towards them.

2 She had never been called to Paris by the Empress, but quite the contrary by the Emperor, who was charmed with her beauty. Josephine never took a liking for her until their common misfortune had pleaded in her favour.

## MADEMOISELLE DE CASTELLANE.

*Air : Que ne suis-je la fougère.*

Vous dont les bontés chéries  
 Ont pris soin de mon bonheur,<sup>1</sup>  
 Dans ces fleurs pour vous cueillies  
 Voyez l'hommage du cœur.  
 Marqués par la bienfaisance  
 Tous vos jours vous font aimer :  
 Laissez la reconnaissance  
 En prendre un pour s'exprimer.

MADAME DE COLBERT, (AUGUSTE).<sup>2</sup>*Même air.*

Dans les murs de Charlemagne  
 J'ai pu vous offrir mes vœux ;  
 D'une fête de campagne  
 Pour vous nous formions les jeux  
 Ce temps, qu'ici tout rappelle,  
 Vient de ranimer mon cœur ;  
 En retrouvant tout mon zèle,  
 J'ai retrouvé le bonheur.<sup>3</sup>

## MYSELF.

*Air : A peine au sortir de l'enfance.*

Vos vertus, leurs grâces et leur charme  
 Sont les premiers mots que j'appris ;  
 Une tante, objet de mes larmes,  
 Jusqu'au tombeau les a chéris.<sup>4</sup>  
 Mon cœur, à ses soins, à son zèle,  
 Doit l'héritage le plus doux,  
 Celui de vos bontés pour elle,  
 Et de tout son amour pour vous. (*Bis.*)

1 Until her arrival at Navarre, Mdle. de Castellane had resided at the house of Madame Campan, where the pensions of herself and of her sister were paid by the Empress.

2 The gallant General Colbert was killed in Spain whilst preparing his soldiers for action.

3 She is now Countess de la Briffe.

4 Madame de M——, a friend of her majesty, who disinherited us, although she had evinced the strongest attachment for us until the moment of her death.

A deputation was announced from Annières, a village dependent upon, and in the vicinity of, Navarre. It consisted of Mesdames Pierlot and Ségur, and of MM. de Turpin, de Vieil-Castel, Deschamps, Horeau and others.

### R O N D E.

*Air : Allons aux prés St.-Gervais.*

COLETTE (MADAME DE SÉGUR).

De nos cœurs, de nos hameaux  
 Chantons l'auguste souveraine ;  
 Que les fils d'or les plus beaux  
 Lui forment long-temps des jours nouveaux.  
 Déjà dans tout son domaine  
 All' commande des travaux ;  
 J'aurons tous, au bout d' la s'maine,  
 La poule au pot.

MATHURIN (M. DE VIEIL-CASTEL).

Sur les monts vl'à qu'on amène  
 Des parures d'arbrisseaux,  
 Et que l'on fait de la plaine  
 Partir les eaux.<sup>1</sup>

COLETTE.

Des chevreuils dans la garenne,  
 Des chamois sur les côteaux ;  
 Et dans la forêt s'promènent<sup>2</sup>  
 Des animaux.

MATHURIN.

Nos jardins des terres lointaines  
 Lui doivent ses végétaux<sup>3</sup> ;

1 Marshes dried up at the expense of the Empress, who, in so doing, rendered a very important service to many neighbouring villages.

2 She had procured several chamois from Chamouny, and had restored the walks in the park and forest to the inhabitants of Evreux, who had for a long time been deprived of them.

3 Green-houses kept at Navarre, under M. Bonpland's superintendence

Nos cités lui doivent la laine  
Des mérinos.

## COLETTE.

Dans Evreux ses mains soutiennent  
Pour les arts d'heureux berceaux,  
Ous' que les jeunes fill' apprennent <sup>1</sup>  
Mieux qu' leurs fuseaux.

## MATHURIN.

All' veut qu' es promenades y prennent <sup>2</sup>  
Des alignemens nouveaux,  
Et qu'on ôte à *Merpomène*  
Ses vieux tréteaux.

## COLETTE.

Si tous ceux qui, dans leur peine,  
Ont eu part à ses cadeaux,  
D'un' fleur lui portaient l'étenne,  
L'bouquet s'rait beau.

## MADAME DE SÉGUR COMING FORWARD.

AIR : *J'ons un curé patriote.*

Voulant de mon tendre hommage  
Peindre la sincérité,  
J'ai pris l'habit, le langage  
Qu'adopte la vérité.  
Vous connaissez dès long-temps  
Mon zèle et mes sentimens,  
Et pour vous (*bis*) ils seront toujours constans !  
Toujours constans !  
Toujours constans !

M. de Turpin then presented to the Empress a pack of cards with the portraits of every person composing her society. Not only were the likenesses perfect, but he

<sup>1</sup> The school of young girls founded by the Empress.

<sup>2</sup> Lands purchased by her majesty for the purpose of extending the public walk and building a theatre.

had displayed much talent in taking off their respective attitudes. Many delightful accessories sprang up under his fertile pencil. M. de Turpin has also drawn in *Sépia* several views of Navarre, which are remarkable for their composition and correctness.

The chamberlain of the Empress, M. de Vieil-Castel, came one morning to say that her majesty desired to speak with me in her private apartment. His manner was so solemn, that, without reflecting that this air of dignity was natural to him whenever he pronounced the name of the Empress, or exercised any of the perogatives of his place, I trembled like a leaf, fancying I had probably done some ridiculous or unbecoming act, and that her majesty was going to scold me. I was so completely agitated by the impression of having displeased her, that I was quite beside myself with apprehension. M. de Vieil-Castel was obliged to repeat the order for me to repair immediately to the Empress. He was also of opinion, I believe, that this interview was likely to be an unpleasant one; for, so far from calming my uneasiness when I expressed my forebodings, he replied that it was my duty to obey. His conduct towards me on this occasion was so extremely abrupt that I felt the more convinced of my having displeased her majesty.

My giddiness allowed me no time for reflection; I could scarcely support myself when I appeared before Josephine, with downcast eyes and a pale and dejected countenance. She asked in so mild a tone of voice what ailed me that I immediately recovered myself and resumed my wonted composure towards her.

“This paleness of countenance is unusual to you,

mademoiselle," said Josephine to me, smiling; "you are probably unwell, and I know the cause of it, you are not accustomed to the cold weather we have here."

"I assure your majesty that I do not feel it; a slight indisposition——"

"No; I am satisfied that the dampness of Navarre is robbing you of your fine colour; you must keep yourself warmly clad if you wish it to return. This shawl will be of use to you; do me the pleasure to accept it, and take that one to your mother; she is indisposed, and I shall presently call to see her."

It will readily be imagined how much I was delighted, not only at having escaped a scolding, but at finding myself possessed of a long cashmere shawl à *palmes*. I was quite bewildered with surprise; and without even thanking the Empress, I hurried away from her apartment with the rapidity of lightning, flew to my mother in order to hand her majesty's present to her, and instantly ran off through the long passage of our apartment, stopping on my way to bid the ladies look at my handsome shawl. "It is mine," I said; and without allowing them time to examine it, continued my precipitate flight. They thought me mad; and I really believe I was seized at that moment with a slight tinge of folly.

The sudden transition from excessive fright to the pleasure of possessing an article of dress which was at that time an object of ambition, much more than at the present day, had quite bewildered me. When I recovered some degree of composure, it occurred to me that I had neglected to thank her majesty, and I again fell a prey to agitation and to the utmost distress of mind at having been guilty of so unaccountable an omission.

I immediately called on Madame d'Arberg and related my trouble to her; she was at all times the confidante of my inmost thoughts; her uniform kindness afforded me a sure pledge of her indulgence. I often stood in need of it, for, like another *Ninette*, I was constantly contravening the Court etiquette; she calmed my fears, gave me good advice, and made me consider it as a piece of good fortune that I had found so kind a friend.

I shewed her the shawl which had been the cause of so much uneasiness; she had seen it before it came to my hands, and told me that so far from the Empress being offended at my abrupt flight, she had greatly enjoyed it, as the best proof I could give of the pleasure her gift had afforded me. "Besides which," added Madame d'Arberg, "so few persons appear in their true character, that her majesty is very partial to those who display any candour, and who neither study their countenances nor their expressions. Continue as you are, and you are sure to please her!" I only repeat these words to shew what a happy life was led at Navarre, since there was so much readiness to excuse errors, and to set a value upon those qualities that were calculated to extenuate them.

I felt delighted and proud to shew my shawl to M. de Vieil-Castel, and to tell him of the fright he had occasioned me by his grave countenance. He was less partial to us than anyone else, and felt disappointed, I think, that without being attached to the Empress by any functions about her person, we should be treated in the same manner as the ladies of her household. He was not possessed of any fortune; he ambited

every favour, and calculated the value of the presents we received as if it had been so much taken from him. We had no particular ground of complaint against him, being accustomed, however, to the gentle and agreeable manners of the greater part of the society, we considered his deportment as forming a contrast to theirs; his character, moreover, had nothing to recommend it on the score of amiability. He was fawning, mild, and obsequious towards his superiors, but extremely harsh towards his inferiors. He was *too assiduous* to her majesty, who occasionally grew impatient at being, as it were, servilely attended upon by him. She delighted in finding a complaisant and obliging character in anyone, but had an utter aversion for a servile and *fawning* disposition. The latter is a correct description of the character of M. de Vieil-Castel in his intercourse with her. We were all partial to his wife, a handsome young woman of great amenity of temper.<sup>1</sup> We were aware that he rendered her unhappy by his tyrannical disposition. The Empress entertained for this lady the sincerest affection, of which she afforded her the most striking testimony.

Madame de Vieil-Castel, whose attachments were always consistent with reason, had a particular regard for her eldest sister, by whom she had been reared, and who had for a long time been in an alarming state of health, though without any apprehensions being felt of her being in imminent danger. Her illness assumed on a sudden a serious turn, and in a few days she was thrown into the agonies of death. M. de Vieil-Castel, feeling reluctant to relinquish his residence at Navarre,

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1 She was M. de Mirabeau's niece.

determined to conceal from his wife the news he had just received ; he imparted it to her majesty, saying that he was desirous of avoiding a painful scene, and deemed it more prudent to conceal the news from Madame de Vieil-Castel.

“ You are quite right,” said the Empress ; “ Madame de Vieil-Castel is so tender-hearted that I should greatly apprehend for her the consequences of a sight so afflicting as that of a dying sister. Since there is no longer any hope, send for your children, in order that they may be on the spot when it will be necessary to announce the death of their aunt ; you will bring them to my apartment, and I will take upon myself that painful commission.”

The children arrived in deep mourning a few days afterwards. Her majesty took them by the hand, and led them into the apartment of Madame de Vieil-Castel, who had only been prepared since the morning for the loss which threatened her.

“ Do not spare your tears, madam,” said Josephine to her ; “ you have suffered a severe loss, but look upon these remaining objects of your affection.”

She stayed a great part of the morning with Madame de Vieil-Castel. Josephine, who had already suffered the deepest afflictions, knew in what language to address a heart penetrated with grief ; she calmed the first ebullitions of so justifiable and cruel a sorrow.

The above trait affords a faithful description of Josephine’s character. This tender foresight, which led her to administer consolation at the moment of her imparting unwelcome news, could only be suggested by a mind of her elevated stamp.

## CHAPTER XXIII

THE EMPRESS RELATES TO US THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HER DIVORCE — LETTER WRITTEN BY HER TO THE EMPEROR A FEW DAYS AFTERWARDS — JOSEPHINE'S LETTER TO THE POPE—CONDUCT OF THE VICEROY AND OF QUEEN HORTENSE — THEY WISH TO QUIT FRANCE — FIRMNESS AND COURAGE DISPLAYED BY JOSEPHINE

WHILST the question of the divorce was vaguely rumoured about, the Empress was, as she informed us, in a state of constant agitation, which greatly endangered her health.

In the saloon which she usually occupied at the Tuileries, there was a small door communicating with the Emperor's closet, by a hidden staircase. When he wished to consult Josephine, or to converse with her, he came in person to rap at her door. She understood the signal, stepped down, and her ladies waited until her return. Her absence was occasionally so much protracted (those conferences only took place in the evening) that she found every one asleep on her return, and laughed heartily at the constrained postures adopted by those ladies out of regard for their toilets. Latterly, every knock at that door caused her such violent palpitations that she felt a difficulty in breathing; she always apprehended to hear the confirmation of what she most dreaded to learn.

When at last she was apprised of her fate, she wept so bitterly that for upwards of six months her sight was affected; her eyes were so oppressed that she was unable to bear the open light, and could no longer distinguish any object. Nevertheless, she did not hesitate in adopting a determination; and she alone revived the courage of her children, who were deeply affected at the news.

The following is the letter she wrote to the Emperor, five or six days after the divorce had been pronounced.

“TO THE EMPEROR.

“My forebodings are realized! You have just pronounced the word which separates us for ever; the rest is nothing more than mere formality. Such, then, is the result, I shall not say of so many sacrifices (they were light to me, since they had you for their object), but of an unbounded friendship on my part, and of the most solemn oaths on yours! It would be a consolation for me, if the state, which you allege as your motive, were to repay my sacrifice by justifying your conduct! But that public consideration, which you urge as the ground for deserting me, is a mere pretence on your part; your mistaken ambition has ever been, and will continue to be, the guide of all your actions—a guide which has led you to conquests and to the assumption of a crown, and is now driving you on to disasters, and to the brink of a precipice.

“You speak of the necessity of contracting an alliance, of giving an heir to your empire, of founding a dynasty! But with whom are you about to form an alliance? With the natural enemy of France, that artful House

of Austria, whose detestation of our country has its rise in its innate feelings, in its system, in the laws of necessity. Do you believe that this hatred, of which she has given us such abundant proofs, more particularly for the last fifty years, has not been transferred by her from the kingdom of France to the French empire? That the children of Maria Theresa, that skilful sovereign who purchased from Madame de Pompadour the fatal treaty of 1756, which you never mention without shuddering; do you imagine, I repeat, that her posterity, when inheriting her power, has not also inherited her spirit? I am merely repeating what you have so often said to me; but at that time your ambition was satisfied with humbling a power which you now find it convenient to restore to its former rank. Believe me, as long as you shall exercise a sway over Europe, that power will be submissive to you; but beware of reverses of fortune.

“As to the necessity of an heir, I must speak out at the risk of appearing in the character of a mother prejudiced in favour of her son. Ought I, in fact, to be silent when I consider the interests of one who is my only delight, and upon whom alone you had built all your hopes? That adoption of the 12th of January, 1806, was, then, another political falsehood! Nevertheless, the talents, the virtues of my Eugene are no illusion. How often have you not spoken in his praise? I may say more. You thought it right to reward him by the gift of a throne, and have repeatedly said that he was deserving of greater favours. Well, then, France has frequently re-echoed these praises; but you are now indifferent to the wishes of France.

“I say nothing to you at present of the person who

is destined to succeed me, and you do not expect that I should make any allusion to this subject. You might suspect the feelings which dictated my language; nevertheless, you can never doubt of the sincerity of my wishes for your happiness; may it at least afford me some consolation for my sufferings. Great, indeed, will be that happiness if it should ever bear any proportion to them."

The Viceroy and Queen Hortense had both determined to quit France for ever, and to accompany their mother to Italy, where she proposed to reside. She it was who represented that the Emperor was a benefactor and a father to them; they owed him an unlimited obedience, and would add to her sorrows by giving any cause of displeasure to their sovereign. In short, she spoke to them with so much warmth that they consented to remain, and to be witnesses at a later period of a marriage which could not fail to be abhorrent to their feelings. The noble conduct displayed by the Viceroy, when the marriage of his mother was annulled, is known to everyone; it excited no surprise, an act of heroism and dignity was natural to him.

I am merely penning my recollections, and it forms no part of my plan to relate events of far too much importance to be described by a female hand. The recital would require a force and energy of diction to which I can lay no claim; I must confine myself to the work of tracing light portraits, the chief merit of which consists in the resemblance of each character, and a strict adherence to truth. Nevertheless, it behoves me to correct a serious error into which the Duke de Rovigo has repeatedly fallen in the course of his "Memoirs."

He alleges that the Empress Josephine's marriage with the Emperor was confined to the *civil* contract. I can bear testimony to the fact of her having, as well as the viceroy, affirmed the contrary on several occasions, in the presence of myself, and of many persons in the habits of close intimacy with her at the palace of Navarre.

The Empress related to us that three days before the coronation, Cardinal Fesch, in obedience to the Pope's formal injunction, gave the nuptial blessing to the married couple at the hour of midnight in the chapel of the Tuileries; very few persons were witnesses to the ceremony.

To the best of my recollection, Marshal Duroc and Prince Eugene were present on the occasion; but I do not possess sufficient information on the subject to be able to affirm it.

The Pope felt a particular regard for the Empress, whose elevation of mind was well known to him; she frequently wrote to his holiness; the following is one of her letters, which was written a short time before the coronation.

“TO HIS HOLINESS, PIUS VII.

“However familiar your holiness may be with human vicissitudes, owing to your intimate acquaintance with our religion, you will doubtless be surprised at beholding a woman raised from obscurity, and on the eve of receiving from your hands the noblest crown in Europe. In the occurrence of so extraordinary an event she discovers the hand of God, and returns thanks for His favours, without presuming to enquire into the designs

of His providence. I should, nevertheless, be ungrateful, holy father, even whilst I glorify our Creator, were I to omit confiding my inmost feelings to the paternal heart of one whom He has chosen to represent Him upon earth. My first sentiment, to which all others are subservient, is a conviction of my own weakness and incapacity; of myself, I am altogether an insignificant being; or, to speak more correctly, my only value is derived from the extraordinary man to whom I am united. This inward conviction, which occasionally humbles my pride, eventually affords me some encouragement when engaged in calm reflection. I whisper to myself that the arm under which the whole earth is made to tremble may well support my weakness; and that this consideration should have the effect of strengthening it. Numberless, however, are the shoals that surround the elevated rank to which he is raising me. I say nothing of the moral corruption which in the midst of worldly grandeur assails the purest hearts; I have a sufficiently good opinion of mine not to apprehend its effects. Nevertheless, when I look down from that height from whence all other dignities must dwindle to nothing, how can I come at a knowledge of actual wretchedness? And yet, alas! I feel that in becoming Empress of the French I should also be their mother; although I should cherish them to little purpose, unless I could evince my affection in a more effectual manner than by mere wishes for their happiness! Nations have a right to demand good deeds from those who govern them; and your holiness, who are wont to return the respectful love of your subjects, not only by constant acts of justice but also by the kindest benefits, are better calculated than any other

sovereign to prove to me by your own example the efficacy of the doctrine you have put in practice. Let me hope, therefore, that whilst you pour the holy oil upon my head, you will not only impress me with the truth of the above precepts, of which my heart never entertained a doubt, but also impart to me those counsels which will render their practical application an easy task."

The Empress was desirous of being furnished with her marriage certificate, which was accordingly put into her hands. She delivered it over to the viceroy, who took it with him to Italy, under an apprehension of its being mislaid or surreptitiously withdrawn from his mother.

When it was a question of the marriage of Maria Louisa, she caused Josephine to be asked whether she had been married by the Church, as she would then feel it impossible to consent to an union which in that case she could not but consider as a sacrilege. The Empress transmitted for answer that she might refer to the *Moniteur* for information. She was thus eluding the truth without denying it, being well aware that Napoleon had refused his consent to the publication in the official journal of a ceremony so long delayed. This is at least what I have frequently heard from her majesty's own lips. May not M. de Rovigo be ignorant of these details? and is their correctness to be denied because they are unknown to him?

The viceroy's character was too candid and upright to warrant our doubting the truth of his assertions; I must therefore persist in maintaining the correctness of what I have just stated, and all those who, like myself, were about Josephine's person will entertain the same conviction. It is, moreover, in perfect accordance with

reason, as it seems impossible to admit that the Pope, who was the Head of the Church, should have consented to crown a female whom he should not have considered bound by the ties of wedlock. The policy of sovereigns has at all times sanctioned the cruel custom of discarding their wives when the welfare of the state appeared to require it. Nevertheless, it will be allowed that the legality of their title would not be contested to them, although they had been deprived of that title.

I have deemed it my duty to communicate these details, such as they have been made known to me ; but I now hasten to lay aside a style that is unbecoming anyone but a writer competent to relate historical events. I dismiss a subject which was a source of so much affliction to the whole nation, and return to Navarre, which, after such protracted anxieties, had resumed its wonted calm.

The Emperor wrote every week to Josephine laconic notes couched in the most affectionate language. She was grateful at all times for this mark of attention ; and frequently read to us some passages of them, which were replete with undisguised tenderness. They were so covered with ink-blots, as to make me imagine, owing to my shortsightedness, that Napoleon wrote upon bordered paper ; I mentioned it to Madame d'Arberg, who greatly enjoyed my mistake, and corrected it by telling me the plain truth, which was that Napoleon wrote very fast, and often shook his pen to such a degree as to occasion those *pretty drawings* that had created my amazement.

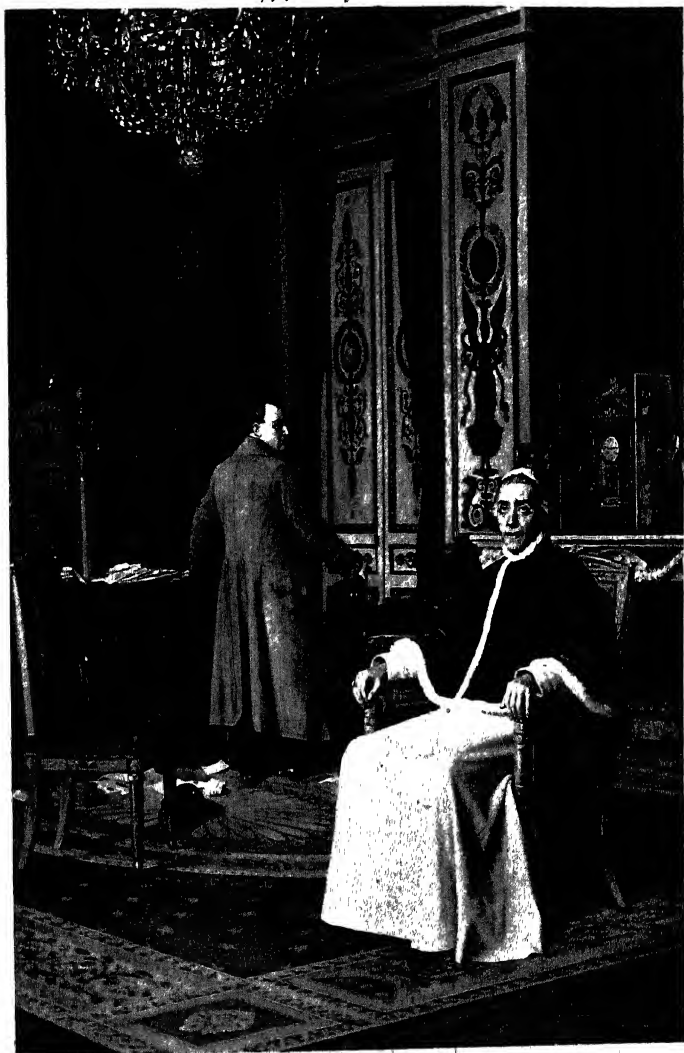
He always spoke of the King of Rome in his letters, and of the pleasure he should feel in bringing him to

*PIUS VII AND THE EMPEROR*

*After the painting by José Frappa*



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Josephine when he grew a little older. She was most anxious to see this child who had caused her such a bitter sacrifice; but she felt persuaded that Maria Louisa would never allow it. She had made so many enquiries on the subject of the latter as to have acquired a correct knowledge of her character.

No circumstance has ever been recorded that could afford an exalted opinion of the mind of this youthful sovereign who was welcomed with so much kindness; this is a clear proof that it had nothing to recommend it. Her conduct since 1814 has shewn the extent of her sensibility.

She was greeted by all parties on her arrival in France, although a deep regret was felt for the amiable woman whom she came to supplant. The nation eagerly sought to find in the new comer that uniform kindness of disposition, that tender compassion for every species of misfortune, that protection to the fine arts, that exhaustless generosity in relieving sorrows, which so eminently distinguished her predecessor. She only exhibited a frigid dignity, a thorough knowledge of Court etiquette, great mildness of disposition, and that finished education to which all Northern princesses can lay claim. The courtiers had certainly an Empress to their liking; but the French in general had lost a mother! By degrees, the enthusiasm excited by the arrival of the niece of Marie Antoinette was allayed; and all shewed an eagerness to return and pay their court to the sovereign who could forgive those who had neglected and offended her, and whose company had so many charms.

She received several letters from persons attached to the Emperor who were desirous of spending a few

days at Navarre. Feeling apprehensive that such excursions would injure them in the opinion of the reigning Empress, she declined the company of all those with whom she had not been in habits of intimacy when she resided at the Tuileries.

The beautiful Madame de Canisy, a lady of honour of Maria Louisa, after having held that rank near Josephine, arrived one morning at Navarre to request the friendly interference of the Empress in a matter of vital interest to her future happiness. Having been divorced from M. de Canisy, she had long solicited the Emperor's consent to her marriage with M. de Caulaincourt, Duke of Vicenza. Napoleon replied that he would never permit such a scandal; he could not interfere with other people's inclinations; but in that case it would be necessary to resign every situation at Court, and remove to a distance from Paris.

Madame de Canisy was conversing with her majesty at the extremity of the gallery, and crying most bitterly. I never saw any beauty to compare with this lady in tears, and did not conceive it possible that a request preferred by such a woman could be denied. The Empress declined interfering in the business, "feeling assured," as she said, "that a refusal would be the consequence. It would be too painful for me to read in the Emperor's reply that he would not allow of any divorce at Court. *One divorce alone could receive his sanction!*"

She persuaded Madame de Canisy to take courage, shewed her the utmost kindness, and dismissed her almost pleased at the interview, although she had not

accessed to her request. I have never forgotten the fascinating countenance of Madame de Canisy, who immediately upon the return of the Bourbons contracted the long-wished-for marriage which was to indemnify her for the sufferings of her former union. She married M. de Caulaincourt, and her conduct until the moment when death deprived her of her husband sufficiently attested the tenderness of her affection for him.

Josephine put some questions to Madame de Canisy respecting Maria Louisa.

"Is it true," she asked, "that she is so serious? She has assuredly no cause to be dissatisfied. I should be delighted to hear of her possessing a cheerful disposition; for the Emperor would not be happy if she were of a dejected turn of mind. We might both have met if she had felt inclined for the interview. Napoleon proposed it to her, but she rejected the proposal with so much ill humour that he never repeated it. I regret the circumstance; her presence would not have caused me any mortification; and I should have advised her as to the course she ought to pursue in order to please the Emperor; and I should deeply deplore his experiencing any domestic troubles. When I was at the Tuileries I often found him deploring some petty family quarrels, which he did not always succeed in appeasing, and have as often been the means of restoring harmony. Do not forget to recommend the like conduct to Maria Louisa; let her above all things endeavour to be on good terms with the Queen of Naples, whose temper is not easily managed."

Madame de Canisy assured her that the Emperor was pleased with his new wife, a remark which seemed

to afford satisfaction to the one he had spurned from his side.

Josephine addressed the following letters to Madame Murat and to the Empress mother; they will afford a correct idea of her conciliating disposition :

“TO MADAME MURAT.

“Sister, you are not a woman of a common stamp; you must, therefore, be written to in a style widely different from that which is addressed to ordinary women. I must own frankly, and without disguise, that I am not pleased with you. Is it possible that you should compel poor Murat to shed tears? I can excuse his laying his victorious arms at your feet; Hercules was no doubt seen to spin at those of Omphale, but never to shed tears before her. Possessing as you do such powers of captivating, why should you prefer the language of command? Your husband is submissive from a sense of fear, when he could wish to yield to no other control than that of your personal charms. By thus exchanging parts you turn a gallant soldier into a timid slave, and exact obedience to yourself as to a despot. The one character is disgraceful to him; the other cannot redound to your credit. The pride of women consists in submission, and we should have no other power than such as a mild and gentle character imparts to us. Your husband, who already ranks so high by his valour and his exploits, fancies that all his laurels must fade away when he appears in your presence. You place your pride in compelling them to bend beneath your pretensions; and the title of being the sister of a hero is sufficient in your sight to constitute you a heroine.

Believe me, sister, this quality, and the character which it infers, are ill suited to us. Let us share with becoming modesty the glory of our husbands, and rest our own upon the task of softening their manners, and procuring the indulgence of mankind for their exploits. Let us merit from the public, who extol the bravery of heroes. that they should likewise applaud that gentleness of disposition which Providence imparts to their wives with a view of restraining their impetuosity.

“TO THE EMPRESS MOTHER.

“Madam and respected mother, exert the ascendancy to which your experience, your dignity, your virtues, and your love for the Emperor, give you so just a claim, in order to restore that domestic harmony which is banished from his family. I was fearful of raising my voice in the midst of those internal discords, under an apprehension that calumny might accuse me of exasperating them by my interference. It becomes you alone, madam, to allay them, and to this effect it will be sufficient for you to say that you are apprised of them. Your prudence will have commenced the work of reconciliation by pointing out the evil; theirs alone can suggest the remedy.

“I refrain from mentioning names; your penetration will not fail to discover the real characters of all the parties concerned. You are no stranger to human passions; and those vices, which have never found a place in your heart, cannot fail to exhibit them in their workings upon those who are dear to you, owing to the deep interest which you feel in their happiness. You will not be much at a loss to discover the rapid strides

of ambition, perhaps also of cupidity, in more than one mind which had hitherto proved free from disguise, but which the favours of fortune are beginning to lead astray. You will discover with apprehension the growing havoc of luxury, and with still greater regret that unfeelingness which follows in its train. I refrain, however, from dwelling upon this reproach, as it is perhaps less founded than the others, and I may have mistaken for heartless insensibility what was perhaps nothing more than a mental infatuation. Be this as it may, such infatuation, which manifests itself by vanity, by an overbearing conduct, by insulting refusals, produces deplorable effects upon all those who are witnesses to it. There is no difficulty in reminding of their origin those who appear to have forgotten it; and the only way to be forgiven one's elevation of fortune is to share its gifts with those upon whom its favours have not alighted."

## CHAPTER XXIV

THE EMPRESS AND M. HOREAU, HER MEDICAL ATTENDANT  
—VARIOUS TRAITS OF TENDER-HEARTEDNESS—PRO-  
MENADES IN SLEDGES—MDLLE. AVRILLON BREAKS HER  
LEG—THE EMPRESS GOES EVERY DAY TO VISIT HER

THE Empress always enquired of M. Horeau, her medical man, if there were any persons dangerously ill in her establishment. When he replied in the affirmative, she sent money for the purpose of calming the anxiety that might be felt by the unfortunate patient.

The man upon whom devolved the duty of distributing coals in the kitchen, was attacked with a malignant fever which placed his life in imminent danger. The Empress heard of it, and particularly recommended him to the care of M. Horeau, whose talents kept pace with his humane feelings.

"Consider, my dear doctor," said Josephine, "that he has six children; neglect no attentions towards him, and tell the overseer of the infirmary that she must redouble her zeal for the unhappy man."

M. Horeau answered that the malignant fever had assumed a less alarming turn, and he hoped to save the coal man, whose health was, in fact, considerably improved. One morning, however, he dismissed under various pretences the nurse and the overseer of the infirmary, got up and threw himself out of the window.

His bedroom being on the second floor he was killed on the spot; he had just had an attack of a burning fever. His singular head-dress sufficiently proved it, for, imagining that he was dressing himself, he had put on his hat and tied it under his chin with a red handkerchief. This accident made a great noise in the palace. It was attempted to conceal it from the knowledge of her majesty, who was, however, informed of it. She settled a pension upon the widow, took charge of the six children, and had them instructed in reading, writing and other studies.

The cold was so intense at Navarre that every pond and even the cascades were frozen over; the Empress, who was always anxious to provide amusements for the young people about her person, procured from Paris two sledges of elegant construction which were intended to be drawn along the ice by skaters. We were all eager to enter them together; but as this was quite impossible, and it was wished to content everyone, wheels were affixed to large arm-chairs in order to satisfy our impatience, and I was about to sit in one of them when my mother opposed it, a prohibition which greatly thwarted my impatience, as I was compelled to wait until the ladies who had first got into the sledges should alight. Being thus put out of temper I returned to the palace. I had scarcely seated myself in the saloon, when M. Bonpland<sup>1</sup> walked in with a countenance so much

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1 A friend of M. de Humboldt, and celebrated for his medical knowledge; he superintended her majesty's green-houses. He was generally beloved, owing to his mild and unassuming disposition. He is at present in Paraguay; and it is impossible to state when he is likely to be restored to France, to sciences, and to his friends.

disconcerted that it was easy to perceive he was the bearer of unwelcome news. Some piercing shrieks at that moment caught my ear, and we were informed that Mdlle. Avrillon (Josephine's private *femme de chambre*), had just broken her leg in the very arm-chair I had so longed to sit in; one of the wheels had dropped off, and Mdlle. Avrillon, having being upset by the shock, had met with a dangerous fall; the shrieks we had heard were occasioned by her having received two severe fractures. The Empress immediately sent for M. Horeau, who was already by the side of the patient. He came to say that he must first of all set the leg, but he foresaw that the wound would be a very serious one. The Empress sent, in the utmost distress, all the gentlemen of the household, one after the other, to rouse the courage of the patient for that cruel operation, and to announce her intention of visiting her as soon as she could do so without creating too strong an emotion.<sup>1</sup> She was aware that her presence had the effect of mitigating the pains of those who were attached to her, and that Mdlle. Avrillon was more than anyone else entitled to the interest she felt for her.

As soon as the leg was set, her majesty quickly ascended a dark narrow staircase leading to the patient's bedroom; the latter burst into tears, saying that what most afflicted her was her being so long without seeing the Empress. "If that is all," replied the Empress, "let

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<sup>1</sup> Her majesty ordered a mechanical bed from Paris. It was the first I ever saw; and saved the patient from acute sufferings. I am surprised that in provincial towns there should not be one at least for every hospital. When may we hope that useful discoveries will be placed within reach of the numerous class of poor people?

your mind be at ease, for I shall come every day to enquire if you have all you stand in need of; and when you have followed the prescriptions of my worthy doctor, I shall remain a long time with you; the length of my visits will be in proportion to the good sense and patience you will have shewn." Accordingly, she never missed a day during two months that Mdlle. Avrillon was compelled to remain in the same position. This example was followed by every other person of the household; whenever the doctor allowed it, they relieved each other near the unfortunate patient; her bedroom had become an appendage to the saloon. The Viceroy and Queen Hortense also paid regular visits to her. Thus it was that they mitigated the protracted sufferings of this person, who was well deserving of the attentions shewn to her by her devoted attachment to her majesty, her natural wit, and her goodness of disposition. I was indebted to her for calming my apprehensions of appearing at Court, and was therefore much afflicted at beholding her painful condition.

Had it not been for my mother's prohibition, which had so much disappointed me, that accident must have happened to myself.

## CHAPTER XXV

M. SPONTINI COMES TO NAVARRE—HIS OPERAS ARE ILL PERFORMED — THE EMPEROR WAS NOT PARTIAL TO FRENCH MUSIC — WITTY TRICK PLAYED UPON THE EMPEROR BY MÉHUL — COMPLETE SUCCESS OF THE OPERA OF L'IRATO — MM. PAËR, CIMAROSA, PAËSIELLO, CHERUBINI, AND LESUEUR

M. SPONTINI came for a few days on a visit to Navarre.<sup>1</sup> We had his scores of the operas of the *Vestale* and *Fernand-Cortès*, which were sung to the best of our abilities. M. de Monaco, who was a good player on the pianoforte, performed for us before M. Spontini's arrival; he now resigned his place to the composer of the two splendid works which we had been rehearsing. Our timidity in singing in his presence was probably detrimental to the harmony of our voices, but this did not prevent his assuring us, with that frankness *peculiar to Italians*, that we sang to admiration.

M. de Monaco was only partial to his own music;

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<sup>1</sup> He had dedicated the opera of the *Vestale* to the Empress, who gave him a diamond pin of great value, and never failed evincing kindness to him whenever he required her assistance. He was as attentive to her after the divorce as when she was on the throne, and was constant in his attendance as soon as he was relieved from his occupations. She had experienced so much ingratitude that she felt a pleasure in proclaiming M. Spontini's grateful remembrance of her.

he therefore agreed that M. Spontini's exaggerated praises were no more than what our talents were entitled to; they electrified him to such a degree that he sang the chorus with greater energy than usual, and feeling gradually stimulated by his example, we did not hesitate to follow him; the whole produced an absolute confusion of sounds. As very few of the *dilettanti* were unemployed, everyone felt perfectly self-satisfied; we accordingly went repeatedly over the same ground, and exhibited a specimen of playing sufficient to afford a thorough disgust of both operas, if it were possible to entertain a dislike for two such master-pieces. Notwithstanding the rage for Rossini's productions, which I only follow at a distance, I will always maintain that the *Vestale* and *Fernand-Cortès* will be enthusiastically admired whenever they are sung by better voices. Many of the works of Paër, Cimarosa, and others, would be equally well received, if they were got up with proper care, but according to present notions Rossini is the only composer deserving of praise. Time will bring on a change in this opinion.

Since I am upon the topic of music, I will repeat an anecdote told by the Empress, and furnish some details on the subject of the celebrated composers with whom circumstances made me acquainted. Whatever concerns the fine arts must be interesting to a nation which is acknowledged to cultivate them with such brilliant success. This is my motive for briefly interrupting the narrative of occurrences at Navarre.

The Empress was attending with the Emperor at the theatre of St. Cloud a representation of the *Zingari in Fiera*, of Paësiello, who was in their majesties' box. A

splendid air of Cimarosa had been introduced into this opera.

Napoleon, who was passionately fond of Italian music, which he was desirous of again bringing into fashion, was in ecstasy at every passage, and complimented Paësiello in terms the more flattering as the person who uttered them was very sparing of such expressions. At last, at the conclusion of the passage I have alluded to, the Emperor turned round, and grasping Paësiello's hand,—

“My good friend,” he exclaimed, “the man who lays claim to this tune may safely call himself the greatest composer in Europe.”

“It belongs to Cimarosa,” faintly uttered Paësiello.

“I am sorry for it, but I cannot recall what I have said.”

In order to make up for the disappointment he had just occasioned, the Emperor, who greatly prized the talents of Paësiello, and was very partial to him, sent him the next morning a splendid present. I doubt, however, whether he succeeded in the object he had in view. An author's self-love is generally more powerful than his love of money; and the honours which he received will not have effaced the recollection of the cruel expressions of the preceding day.

During his stay in Paris, Paësiello often went to the house of Madame de Montesson, where I met him. A young lady of the company, who was considered as having an admirable talent for singing, made a display of her vocal powers on a certain occasion when he was present. She affected great pretensions in performing the difficult passages of that celebrated composer, and was greatly applauded. Her admirers, moreover, feeling

desirous of conveying to her the praises of Paësiello, came up to him in the expectation of his gratifying their wishes. Astonished at his silence, they questioned him respecting the merits of Mdle. —.

“She has very fine eyes.”

“No doubt; but do you not think she has a delightful voice?”

“They are very expressive.”

“Assuredly so; but what do you think of her method of singing?”

“I never saw finer eyes.”

In vain they attempted to force him from the topic, and the disconcerted amateurs no longer ventured to express such extravagant enthusiasm when listening to the voice of Mdle. —.

Paësiello reported that there were a hundred requisites for singing—ninety-nine times a good voice and one correct method. How many there are who possess no such requisities and yet fancy they sing well!

He had a handsome, dignified, and expressive countenance. He felt an inward conviction of his superior talent, which was not then contested with him; but he spoke of it with so candid a pride that he almost led me to forgive him. Others, with less claim to distinction, are swelled with vanity, and although they affect to conceal it, are the more insupportable in their disguise. They confine themselves to the task of running down everyone else. I prefer those who openly praise themselves, and at the same time do justice to others. Such was Paësiello's character. He was of opinion that *he* composed in a *superior* style, and that many others acquitted themselves *well*. This is

allowing more than what an ordinary talent is disposed to concede.

The failure of the opera of *Proserpine*, which contained, however, some fine passages, was a severe blow to his fame. The Emperor was outrageous at this failure, and repeatedly said that the French were no judges of music. He was displeased that his *protégé* should not succeed, and that others should not fall in with his taste. That opera, notwithstanding the great expense incurred, its pretty ballets, and splendid scenes, had only a short run. The Government persisted in ordering the performance of it, and the public in keeping away. It was found necessary to give it up. Paësiello felt disgusted with France, and determined to return to Italy.

His situation of Master of the Imperial Chapel became vacant by his resignation, and Napoleon felt desirous of appointing a man worthy of replacing him. He fixed upon Méhul, with whom he had been intimately acquainted long before the expedition to Egypt. His choice was equally commendable on the score of talent, of wit, and of personal character. Everything led to believe that Méhul would be anxious to accept the proposal. Great, therefore, was the Emperor's astonishment when he received a formal refusal.

"I can only accept of the place," said Méhul to him, "on condition that you will allow me to share it with my friend Cherubini."

"Never mention him; he is a man of a snappish disposition; and I have an utter aversion for him."

"It is certainly his misfortune, General, to have failed in securing your good opinion; but in point of sacred music he is superior to us all; he is straitened

in his circumstances, has a numerous family, and I should feel happy in reconciling you to him."

"I repeat that I will not have him."

"In that case, General, I must positively decline; nothing can alter my determination. I belong to the Institute, he does not. I will not allow it to be said that I take advantage of the kindness you shew me, in order to secure every place for myself, and deprive a celebrated man of what he is so justly entitled to claim at your hands."

Méhul persisted in his resolution, and Napoleon remained inflexible; he therefore commissioned the Empress to look out for a composer whose talents might be equal to the situation which he had intended for Méhul. Josephine mentioned the circumstance to Madame de Montesson, who earnestly recommended to her notice M. Lesueur, whose merit was not sufficiently appreciated; he could not succeed in procuring his opera of the *Bardes* to be acted; he was withal extremely poor. Ever anxious to relieve misfortune, Josephine spoke to the First Consul in the highest terms of M. Lesueur, who was appointed to the situation. His opera was performed, and had a complete success.

When Napoleon was only a general of brigade he made some observations to Cherubini respecting his style of music, which the General, with some colour of justice, considered too scientific and deficient in melody.

"General," replied Cherubini, quite enraged, "attend to your trade of winning battles and leave me to mine, of which you know nothing."

This retort greatly offended Napoleon, who never could forgive it.

Cherubini was unable to obtain any place during his reign ; his untractable character prevented his adopting any steps for removing the prejudice entertained against him by the ruler of the world. He felt pleased at having nettled him ; and almost quarrelled with Méhul, whom he often accused of being an intriguer—an accusation which was perfectly unjust, since the latter had refused on his account a lucrative and honourable appointment. Cherubini remained for many years in the utmost distress, wholly through his own fault.

One is at a loss to conceive that the Emperor should have been so much vexed at an abrupt reply made to him, and yet that he should not only have forgiven to Méhul a kind of trick of which he was himself the dupe, but have continued to retain a sincere regard for him.

At the period when Ariodant, Euphrosine, and Stratonice were most in vogue, the Consul incessantly repeated to Méhul that his productions were no doubt excellent, but that they contained no songs at all to be compared with those of the Italian masters. "You always give us scientific compositions over and over again, my dear Méhul, but as for gracefulness and pleasing melody, you Frenchmen can as little pretend to it as the Germans." Méhul gave no reply, but went in quest of his friend Marsollier, and requested he would compose for him a short lively act, the sketch of which might be sufficiently absurd to justify its being ascribed to a poet *de libretto*. He enjoined him at the same time the most profound secrecy.

Marsollier having full confidence in the talent and wit of his friend set himself to work, and wrote the opera of *L'Irato* in a very short space of time. He took it to

Méhul, who immediately composed the charming music of it, which is still enthusiastically applauded at the present day. Marsollier repaired to the committee of the theatre of the Opéra Comique, stated his having received from Italy the score of an opera, the music of which was so delightful that he was confident of success, notwithstanding the insipidity of the poem, which he had been at the trouble of translating from the Italian original. (Care had been taken to get the part copied by an unknown hand.) The actors were all attention, felt delighted with the composition, and anxious to get up the opera. They contended with each other for the distribution of the characters, and all the papers announced with much emphasis that an *admirable*, an *enchanteing*, opera from an Italian composer, would shortly be performed. The first representation was announced. The Consul expressed his intention of attending it, and prevailed upon Méhul to accompany him. "It will be a heart-breaking mortification for you, my poor friend ; but perhaps, when you are listening to those airs so very different from what the modern school produces, you will recover from your fancy for *odd* compositions." Méhul pretended to be disappointed at what Bonaparte was telling him, and refused to go to the theatre ; the former still insisted, and he at last gave way.

At the very overture of the opera the Emperor began to applaud ; every part was charming, true to nature, full of grace and vivacity ; his praises were incessant, and he constantly repeated these words : "Unquestionably *the Italian music is the only good one.*" The opera concluded in the midst of loud acclamations, and the authors were enthusiastically called for. Martin

came to ask Marsollier if he wished to be named as the translator. "Certainly not," replied the latter, "but as author of the words; and you will announce at the same time that the music is Méhul's composition." The whole audience was lost in astonishment, for the secret had been so well kept that none of the actors had any suspicion of the truth. The curtain drew up, the three customary bows were made, and the names of the authors were proclaimed, and drowned in general plaudits. The Consul adopted the only sensible course; he had enjoyed himself, was pleased with what he had heard, and shewed no signs of anger.

"Deceive me always in this way," said he to Méhul, "and I shall rejoice at it as much for my own satisfaction."

This anecdote was related to me by Méhul himself, who always delighted in the recollection of Napoleon's astonishment, and of the kind of hesitation which his countenance exhibited, previously to uttering the compliment he had received from him.

This celebrated composer, who was so soon torn from sciences and from the endearments of friendship, yielded to none in the charms of his conversation. Serious and lively by turns, he related with an equal felicity of diction the most tragical stories and the most lively anecdotes. In the succeeding chapter I will relate one of which he was the subject; it had left an indelible impression on his memory, and he still enjoyed it in the company of his friends. I shall also notice the worthy old Monsigny, whom I frequently met, and could not fail to be delighted with: for all those qualities which constitute a good and amiable man were found combined in his character.

## CHAPTER XXVI

MÉHUL AT GIVET, HIS NATIVE TOWN — SINGULAR FÊTE  
GIVEN TO HIM—MONSIGNY—GRÉTRY

MÉHUL was a native of Givet; as his family was settled in that town, he performed several journeys to visit them; his fellow-townsmen, proud of the celebrity he had acquired, determined to offer him a fête on his next visit. They concerted together beforehand, in order that nothing should be wanting to the solemnity which they designed to give to this mark of respect for a superior talent, and for a man of estimable qualities.

Méhul had scarcely arrived when he was waited upon by a deputation of *amateurs*, who requested he would attend a representation which was to be given on the following day at the theatre, where his works were performed, so they said, with surprising harmony for a company of strolling players. "There is no knowing," added the deputation, "what the presence of your genius may effect." Méhul felt surprised that his music could be performed indifferently well with the aid of such scanty means, and he promised to comply with the wishes of his townsmen.

Large placards were posted up in every street on the following day, with a pompous and lengthy announcement that the inhabitants of Givet, feeling desirous of

testifying their admiration for M. Méhul, would give in the evening the opera called *Une Folie*, to be succeeded by an entertainment and the crowning of the great composer's bust. Méhul came to the theatre attended by every person of note in the town. He was placed in a kind of niche, dignified by the name of box, and ornamented with a figured tapestry of old standing, and with garlands of paper flowers. He was greeted with bursts of applause on his appearance, and had scarcely sat down when the curtain drew up. An actor came forward to the balustrade, and recited verses which alluded to the happiness of possessing so distinguished a spectator, whose indulgence he solicited, and announced that the opera of *Une Folie* was about to begin; but that as it was impossible to procure musicians, *every piece of music would be passed over*. They accordingly performed the *comedy* of M. Bouilly by way of a treat to Méhul.

The remainder of the evening was in perfect keeping with its commencement. The bust intended to be crowned was made of clay; and with a view to render the likeness still more striking, the nose had been lengthened beyond measure, in order that it should appear to be in due proportion when seen at a distance. An actress, whilst endeavouring to place the crown of laurel on this apology for a head, had the misfortune to come in contact with its enormous nose, which fell to the ground, and it became necessary to replace it with the assistance of a black pin. These untoward accidents did not prevent the newspaper of the following day from trumpeting forth the excellent order of the *splendid* fête given by the town to the celebrated Méhul, and noticing the enthusiasm it had excited, taking care not to omit

mentioning how much he was affected at receiving an homage of so flattering a nature. The fact is that his risible faculties were kept in a state of constant excitement, and he had no other means of concealing his laughter than by holding a handkerchief to his face; this led to the supposition that he was deeply affected, and did him the highest honour in the opinion of the elegant ladies of Givet.

Méhul was universally liked, and was known in society as the *worthy Méhul*. He was ready to do justice to the talents of everyone, even his enemies, and shewed a constant attachment to his friends, to whom he frequently afforded pecuniary assistance. As he was a regular and punctual man, he always found the means of having money at command for the purpose of assisting those who were in want. He took upon himself the charge of defraying the education of one of his nephews, M. Daussoigne, who did not exhibit for him that kindness to which he had so just a claim.

It was the fate of M. Méhul to be unhappy in his domestic circle. Having married an agreeable woman, he naturally looked forward to happiness, but she rewarded his affection by the deepest ingratitude, deserted him some years previous to his death, and only returned a month before he expired. He frankly forgave her the sorrows she had entailed upon him since their marriage, and left her the whole of his fortune, with the exception of some legacies which he bequeathed to his family and to a few friends who had afforded him every consolation during his long and painful illness.

I was also very intimate with Monsigny, who first set the example of altering the system of the theatre of

the *Italian comedy*, where before his time the only performances were ballads and broad farces, which it required all the talent of Carlin to keep in vogue.

Monsigny's works were attended with the most complete success; and when we consider the time at which they were composed, we are forced to acknowledge that they must have possessed great intrinsic merit. Elleviou restored many of them to the stage; and by the fascination of his voice and his excellent acting, he clothed them in all the attraction of novelty. The music now appears extremely weak, and there is a total absence of harmony; nevertheless, we discover in *Felix* some delightful songs. This opera was the last of his compositions that was acted on the stage. He no sooner attended the performances of Grétry than he relinquished the career he had opened in so brilliant a manner. He possessed great simplicity of character, and told us that, finding that Grétry would crush him by his superiority, he had preferred withdrawing from the scene. Notwithstanding their being rivals, they always remained on friendly terms. In the decline of life they frequently met, and invariably accosted each other in these words:

"Good morning to you, sir," said Grétry.

"Peace be with you," replied Monsigny.

"Sir, all are not competent to compose melody."

"Who knows that better than I do?"

These two Nestors of music cordially shook hands, and parted until the next interview, which was an exact repetition of the preceding one.

Monsigny had married a young lady extremely addicted to devotion. On one occasion when he went to do duty at Villers-Cotterets, the residence of the

Duke of Orleans, where he acted as steward, his young wife consigned to the flames three works fully completed, in order to prevent her husband from having any further intercourse with the stage. It is very possible that they were superior in merit to his earlier performances.

Napoleon was one day at the theatre when the *Deserter* was performed. He was so pleased with it that he asked M. Picard, who was in his box, what was the name of the composer. Being informed that the author of the music had been wholly ruined by the Revolution, and that he had nothing more to depend upon for himself and his family than a small pension made to him by the comedians of the Theatre Feydeau, he granted him one of 6,000 francs, and appointed him a Knight of the Legion of Honour. He was also a member of the Institute.

He was greatly advanced in years at the time of the King's return, and lived quite retired from the world; notwithstanding this circumstance, he was appointed a Knight of Saint Michael. He was unable, however, to enjoy this favour of his sovereign; the ribbon which so honourably attested the esteem felt by Louis XVIII. for his talent and his personal character, was received at his house at the moment of his quitting a life exempt from reproach. That decoration was deposited upon his coffin.

## CHAPTER XXVII

A DISTRESSED MUSICIAN COMES TO NAVARRE — THE  
EMPRESS LISTENS TO HIM — PORTRAIT OF THIS MAN —  
REPROOF GIVEN BY THE EMPRESS

I RETURN at last to Navarre. If I have too long wandered from my subject, I have been carried away by the pleasure I felt in adverting to a few celebrated characters. I crave the indulgence of my readers for the absence of arrangement in my narrative; but I should feel it impossible to assume so much command over myself as to take time for reflection and present an agreeable recital of events; I note them down such as they occur to my memory, and follow the impulsion of my ideas. As it never entered into my contemplation to become a writer, it was out of my power to methodise the plan of a literary work. I repeat that I have not taken up my pen with the view to shine in the character of an authoress, but merely to give a fairer description than has hitherto been presented of several historical personages with whom I have been in habitual intercourse.

I must therefore be excused my constant rambles, out of consideration for my desire to exhibit some elevated characters to public admiration; it is with regret that I ever mention the names of those for whom I entertain no esteem; but I owe it to that

adherence to truth to which I have pledged myself; it will occasionally be painful to my feelings to abide by this engagement; were I, however, to disguise the truth on some points, I should justly expose myself to be doubted on others; I shall, therefore, as little conceal what is wrong as omit noticing what is praiseworthy. I now revert to my favourite subject, and again turn my exclusive attention to Josephine.

A poor musician sent to solicit leave to perform *by himself* a quartetto in the presence of the Empress. He announced his intention of imitating the voices of four different actors in such a manner as to produce a complete illusion. Her majesty consented to hear him the same night.

He came at the appointed time, and his grotesque appearance created a general mirth. His black surtout nearly grown white from age, a waistcoat embroidered with coloured silk, a wretched sword of rusty steel, buckles ornamented with false stones, an enormous frill, which bore the marks of former plaiting; such was his toilet. An uncombed greasy head, a large red nose, small squinting eyes, and bandy legs, formed his external appearance. He stood before us with his arms crossed over, with his hands under his elbows to conceal the ravages occasioned by their constant rubbing, and with his feet turned outwards. I own that I enjoyed more than anyone this ludicrous caricature.

Her majesty maintained a grave composure, asked him several questions respecting his native country, *the peculiar character of his talent*, to which he replied in appropriate and measured terms, which did not much accord with his singular appearance.

He called for a folding-screen, and placing himself behind it he began the expected quartetto. No common ballad-singer ever cut a more ridiculous figure. Josephine's gravity kept for a long time our risible propensity in check; but he no sooner assumed a tone of voice resembling a flute, for the purpose of imitating Madame Barilli, than we were unable to contain ourselves, and broke out into loud bursts of laughter, calculated to disconcert the poor musician, who, nevertheless, continued his performance.

The Empress came up to him with an air full of dignity, and assured him that she was very well satisfied; his imitation was perfectly correct, as he must have discovered by the hilarity of the company. She ordered supper for him, of which I believe he stood greatly in want, and desired that ten napoleons should be given to him. "Ladies, you are very young," she said to us, "and you may be excused for laughing at ridicules wherever you find them; with respect to myself I should have been exceedingly unhappy could anything else have struck my attention except the extreme wretchedness of this poor man, who took so much pains to please me at a time when he was dying with hunger." Never was any lesson conveyed with greater gentleness, or more deserved; never did any produce a deeper impression; for my part, I was so deeply affected by it that I could have shed tears of sorrow at having joined in the sport.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

BALL GIVEN ON OCCASION OF THE MARRIAGE OF PRINCESS STEPHANIE OF BADEN—I AM INVITED TO IT—VARIOUS EXPRESSIONS OF THE EMPEROR—MESDAMES CHARPENTIER, SIMON, CHAT . . . —THE PRINCESS OF PONTE-CORVO—REPLY OF HER FATHER, M. CLARI—STRANGE REVENGE OF GIRODET—PENSION GRANTED TO MY FATHER—THE PRINCE OF LÉON

THE Empress recalled to my memory the two occasions on which I had spoken to the Emperor, and reproached me very justly with not having taken advantage of them to solicit some favour for my family ; my apprehension of doing so was owing to the following cause :

Several persons who had it in their power to obtain a place for my father, wishing to avoid the trouble of asking, persuaded us that Napoleon entertained the *most bitter* prejudice against him ; and that care ought to be taken not to mention his name before his majesty. We had long been familiar with misfortunes, and easily gave credit to whatever was calculated to increase our depression of mind ; so far, therefore, from endeavouring to remove this pretended prejudice, we resigned ourselves to carry on our existence by means of a scanty pension made to us by an aunt, which was scarcely adequate to our support.

My father would not have accepted of any place at Court ; his openness of character recoiled at acting the part of a Royalist courtier. Having long suffered for the cause which had cost him his fortune, he never would consent to be numbered among the glittering followers of the Emperor ; but I have no doubt that he would have shewn every disposition to hold any employment where he might have been of service to his country, to which he was anxious to bestow the advantage of an experience acquired by long application to study and the severest trials of fortune. The first wish of every honourable man is to be of use to his native country ; all party opinions give way to the consideration of being able to promote its glory or its happiness. Feeling persuaded, however, that he could never have access to any place that was suitable to him, he constantly kept at a distance from the reigning power.

At the period of the marriage of Princess Stephanie of Baden, my mother and I were invited to the ball given at the Tuileries. It was necessary to appear in full dress, a circumstance which prevented my mother from accepting the invitation ; unwilling, however, to deprive me of the enjoyment of a fête which so greatly excited my curiosity, she confided me to the care of one of our female relations with a request that she would not mention who I was if the Emperor should chance to ask my name. The extreme simplicity of my dress, which formed a contrast with the brilliancy of others, and my youthful appearance, attracted the attention of the sovereign, who came up to me ; my whole frame shook with apprehension—a weakness peculiar to me on every extraordinary

occasion. My mind instantly recollected all that had been said to me of the Emperor's antipathy for my father, and I dreaded some of those abrupt expressions to which one was often exposed at such fêtes. Fortunately Napoleon only spoke to me of dancing—paid me a flattering compliment, to which I acutely replied, giving him the appellation of *Sir*.

Turning to the lady next to me,—

“What is your name?” he asked.

“Sire, I am Madame Charpentier.”

“The general's wife?”

“Yes, sire.”

“This ball-dress does not become you. You are very much altered.”

The next lady was distinguished by her remarkable beauty and a profusion of diamonds. The Emperor appeared struck with her, and asked with a smile,—

“What is your name, madam?”

“Sire,” she replied with an affected air, “I am Madame Simon.”

“Very true,” said the Emperor, “I recollect . . .” And he left her in an immoderate fit of laughter.

This Madame Simon was well known by the name of *Mdlle. Lange*, when an actress at the *Comédie Française*. Her handsome features had captivated *M. Simon*, a wealthy coach-maker and afterwards a banker, who married her. Napoleon had a retentive memory; he probably recollected the story of the famous portrait painted by *Girodet*,<sup>1</sup> which was the occasion of his laughing when he heard her name mentioned.

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<sup>1</sup> *Girodet* had painted a striking likeness of *Madame Simon*, who did not consider it sufficiently handsome. *M. Simon* bargained about the price, and refused to take the picture. The celebrated

It was at this ball that Napoleon proved so ungrateful to Madame de Chat——, who had proved of the utmost service to him when he was no more than a lieutenant of artillery. Possessing nothing beyond his pay, he was forced to lead a life of privations, and was very often unable to provide the most indispensable wants. Madame de Chat——, who was much attached to him, adopted a variety of ways for supplying him with what he stood in need of; she offered him an apartment in her own house, and persuaded him that he was rendering her a service in accepting the offer, by alleging that the furniture was spoiling for want of being exposed to the air. She told him she had an utter aversion to taking her meals alone, and that if her society was not too irksome to him, she would be very happy to profit by his being in her neighbourhood, which would

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artist, feeling satisfied that he had copied nature as closely as it was possible to do, determined to be revenged of the injustice done to him. He altered several accessories to the figure, retained its reclining attitude, added a golden shower falling upon it, and placed in the foreground an enormous turkey-cock proudly contemplating the charms of its beautiful Danaë. This painting was exhibited for two days in the saloon. Everyone recognized Madame Simon, who immediately sent to request that Girodet would return her the portrait, which she would pay for at any price he might think proper to demand. The painter's revenge was gratified, and he declined her offer; but he promised to conceal his work from the public gaze, and he kept his word. I believe that at his death it came into the possession of Charpentier, his pupil. M. Simon having failed some years ago, his wife sold all her jewels, even those which she possessed before her marriage, in order to meet the claims of his creditors. This conduct is the more praiseworthy as it has never been *noticed in the newspapers*. Madame Simon is living in great distress in a fifth story; she was said to be an excellent woman. This is clearly proved by the circumstance of her having preserved many sincere friends who help her to bear with the sudden change from the most splendid condition to a very precarious existence.

afford her the advantage of having some one to take share of her meals. In a word, she proved for a long time a most serviceable friend to him.

Her fortune was irretrievably ruined some time after Bonaparte's elevation to power ; she frequently wrote to request he would afford her the means of repairing it, but her letters remained unanswered. Being apprised that a ball would be given for the marriage of the Emperor's adopted daughter, and fancying that he would on that occasion be more favourably disposed than usual towards her, she exerted every endeavour to obtain an invitation, in the hope of handing in a petition, and of having some conversation with the Emperor. She felt apprehensive that her letters were intercepted by some secret enemy, and conceived it to be impossible that the signal services she had rendered could ever be forgotten. She stationed herself in the Gallery of Diana, on his majesty's passage, and presented to him with a trembling hand the petition upon which depended her future fate. The Emperor fixed his looks upon her, his countenance darkened, and he broke out in these words :

*"How came you to my residence?"*

The unhappy woman heard no more, she fainted, and it was found necessary to remove her. It is said that she received on the following morning the order for a pension of 1,200 francs. Why, then, make her purchase at so dear a price what was no more than a debt of gratitude which he owed to that lady?

Nothing could exceed the splendour of the ball or the elegance of the quadrilles; each lady had a complete set of jewels lent to her by the Princess, who led the quadrille, and the gentlemen's caps were looped with large diamonds. The Grand Duchess of Berg

(Madame Murat) was more particularly remarked by splendour of her brilliant and tasteful toilette. Her dress was spangled with diamond bees, her band, her necklace, and the diamond aigrettes of her toque, were invaluable.

I was for an hour near the Princess of Ponte-Corvo, now Queen of Sweden. She criticised and ridiculed everything, and appeared in very ill humour, a circumstance which surprised me the more, as everyone appeared pleased and contented at that elegant fête. I enquired the cause of it from Madame de B——, who told me that Madame Bernadotte was inconsolable at not having been married to the Emperor. He had solicited her hand a few months after Joseph's marriage. M. Clari not being over-satisfied with the match of his eldest daughter, had replied with harshness *that he had got quite enough with one Bonaparte in his family*. Out of so many conquered thrones only one is now in existence, and Madame Bernadotte wears the royal crown. Strange has been her destiny!

I spoke to the Emperor on another occasion in the forest of Fontainebleau, where I had gone to see the hunt. He shewed me the greatest kindness; enquired what I wanted, and appeared much astonished that I should merely request to be allowed to speak of the distribution of the spoils. I was as apprehensive as at the Tuileries of making the least request on behalf of my family, being always persuaded that the prejudice so repeatedly mentioned to me was not altogether imaginary, though it had in reality such little existence that his majesty granted to my father, some time afterwards, a pension of a thousand crowns which he had in no manner solicited. M. Chaptal having mentioned our

name in presence of the Emperor, was questioned respecting my father's talents; and the Emperor, being satisfied with the answers given to him, ordered a pension of three thousand francs to be paid to him by monthly instalments, raised from the revenue of the newspapers.

Had I been possessed of more courage, I might have had the good fortune to render the situation of my parents as comfortable as it was painful. I regretted for a long time having missed such opportunities, and am only consoled by the certainty of the mortification my father would have experienced at my having made any attempt, as he was forced to espouse a party in 1814. To betray his benefactor, or to renounce the Bourbons, whom he had faithfully served and to whom he was strongly attached, would have been a most cruel alternative for his feelings. Providence spared him the grief of making such a choice. He was nothing at the time of the return of the family in whose behalf he had quitted his native land and had been involved in ruin; they neglected to employ him, all those who were accustomed to favours having rushed into the ante-chambers of the ministers, and pounced upon every place. Nothing except the Court dress had been altered at the Tuileries; the same persons held possession of the same places; and this gave rise to a witty expression of the Prince de Léon, who had held no place under the Emperor. Happening to be in the King's saloon with Prince Berthier, the latter spoke of their mutual attachment to the royal family:

"There is nevertheless a remarkable difference between us," replied M. de Léon, "your attachment is that of cats *to a house*; mine is that of a dog *to the person of his master*."

## CHAPTER XXIX

M. DE CHAMBAUDAIN, PREFECT OF EVREUX — DINNER GIVEN BY HIM—SINGULAR TABLE ORNAMENT—ADVENTURE IN THE FOREST—PORTRAIT OF ITS HERO—HIS COSTUME—MADAME DE MONTG \* \*—INDIFFERENCE SHEWN BY THE EMPRESS

M. DE CHAMBAUDAIN, the Prefect of Evreux, invited us to a grand dinner; we all accepted the invitation. The service was splendid, and the table ornament delightful. An immense glass plateau was covered with handsome vases filled with artificial flowers. M. de Portalès, with that politeness so natural to him, drew the attention of the company to the elegance of the table, adding that it was no doubt due to the taste of Madame de Chambaudain.

"You are quite right, Count," replied the Prefect. "I am in fact indebted to Minette" (the name he always gave his wife) "for everything you see. She brought me the vases from Italy; she sends me every summer the flowers that have decorated her during winter. *Ses pensées sont toutes pour moi*,"<sup>1</sup> added the Prefect, pointing at a bunch of those flowers. This witty saying, which was in such exquisite good taste, was received with a smile of satisfaction.

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1 The French word *pensées* has a double signification—viz., the flower called heartsease, and thought.—*Translator*.

We looked at each other with surprise at being made the confidantes of those domestic details, and M. de Portalès said that the idea of seeing in each nosegay *a handful of hair* had taken away his appetite. This observation afforded us a fresh subject of merriment at the expense of the Prefect, who was indebted for his place to no other cause than Madame de Chambaudoin's being in the good graces of Josephine and Queen Hortense. I was never acquainted with her, as the education of her daughter required her presence in Paris. Her amenity of temper, the amiability of her well-cultivated mind, and her unassuming disposition, were the theme of general praise.

Some days after that dinner, Mesdames Gazani, de Castellane, and de Mackau expressed a wish to take a walk in the forest of Evreux. For my part I never had a relish for walking, and always found great insipidity in a promenade without an object. I felt much greater comfort in driving out in an elegant calash, and declined being of the proposed excursion. I went with the Empress, according to my custom, and we returned at an early hour. I enquired if the ladies had returned from their excursion, and was answered in the negative.

Their continued absence created some uneasiness in the palace. Messengers were sent in various directions after them, under the apprehension of their having lost their way. At last they made their appearance exhausted with fatigue, but delighted at a discovery they had made, which was, as they said, a perfectly romantic adventure. Anxious to learn the details of it, we all questioned them at once, and they related to us that, having lost their way,

they had descried a small house surrounded with a flower garden, which was tended with the greatest care. Being unable to find out their way, they entered this pleasing retreat which had never been mentioned at the palace, and which we had never discovered in our rambles. They were politely ushered by a servant into the saloon, where they met a very pleasing, well-dressed lady, who was seated on a couch, and held in her arms a lovely child who was playing with a younger infant, in a kneeling attitude before its mother.

The strangers were struck with astonishment at beholding this picture, and the unknown lady appeared surprised at receiving the visit of three females of such remarkable beauty. They put to each other a variety of questions, young people are of communicative dispositions, the conversation was therefore very animated, nevertheless, the recluse answered with great reserve. She expressed her regret to those ladies at being unable to offer them the guidance of *her husband*, who was in Paris since the preceding day. She directed her *femme de chambre* to shew the ladies the shortest road to Navarre; and after helping them to some excellent milk and fruit, she conducted the handsome wanderers to the distance of a few hundred paces from her habitation. All children soon take a liking, especially to pleasing countenances, and the infants clung to the dresses of their *friends*, and wished to go along with them to see the Empress *who distributed bread to the poor, and playthings to well-behaved children*.

Madame Gazani said she was certain her majesty would be delighted to learn that she had such a neighbour, and would no doubt invite her to come to the

palace. The young lady replied with great courtesy, but with no less reserve, and did not invite the strangers to repeat their visit.

This meeting was the exclusive topic of conversation during dinner. The Empress promised to have enquiries made, and to invite that interesting family to her palace.

She learned on the following day that the house in question had been purchased by the family who then resided in it, and who received no company whatever; it was supposed that the lady was unhappy, as she had been twice seen shedding tears in the forest. Her Majesty sent to invite M—— to dine with her.

We fancied that he could not be otherwise than handsome, witty, and amiable, since he had thus captivated a female whom those ladies represented to be extremely well educated; her conversation was fascinating; and she was supposed to be musical, as a harp had been seen in the saloon close to a frame upon which was placed the rough sketch of a painting. We each pictured to ourselves this engaging hero, and impatiently expected his appearance. He had accepted her majesty's invitation; our curiosity would therefore be gratified in a very few days. Madame Gazani in particular was eager to become acquainted with the man whom the *beauty of the forest* (this was the name we gave her as being more romantic than Madame M——) had often called the *most engaging of his sex*. Our disappointment will readily be imagined when we beheld a corpulent man pitted with the small-pox, with his hair combed over his forehead, and an appearance, the vulgarity of which was greatly augmented by a sky-blue coat and chased buttons. We

at first imagined that the Empress had sent for another person in order to deceive us, and we laughed heartily at the caricature he had assumed; nevertheless, Madame d'Arberg and M. de Beaumont assured us in so serious a manner that he was the very man we were so anxious to see, that we could no longer have any doubt upon the subject.

Our surprise was at its height when we learnt that he had already inspired a violent passion in Madame de Montg——, one of the most celebrated women of our time. She had married him; but this gay deceiver had proved faithless to his vows; he carried off the young woman I have lately mentioned, whom he passed off for his wife; and she was so deeply enamoured of him as to refuse returning to the bosom of her family who were ready to forgive her past frailty if she would consent to renounce the guilty connection.

M—— was a well-informed man; but this circumstance does not diminish my surprise at his having turned the brains of two such remarkable women. He confessed all the foregoing details to the Empress, who was urging him to bring his wife to see her; as soon as her majesty was informed of the scandal of his conduct, she treated him so coldly that he never returned to the palace.

## CHAPTER XXX

SUPERSTITION OF THE EMPRESS—PREDICTION MADE TO HER AT MARTINICO — M. DE BEAUHARNAIS — THE DUCHESS D'AIGUILLON — THE DEATH OF ROBESPIERRE IS STRANGELY ANNOUNCED TO THE PRISONERS — M. GUILLOTIN — HIS REGRET

THE Empress was superstitiously inclined, though much less so than has been reported. She was averse, it is true, to any conversation in her presence on the subject of predictions, as an unhappy end had been foretold to her. Nevertheless, she consented to gratify our anxiety to be correctly informed of what had been predicted to herself at Martinico. The following is her account of it:

Whilst she was yet unmarried, she saw in one of her walks several slaves collected round an old woman, who was telling their fortune; she stopped to listen to her. The sorceress on perceiving her uttered a piercing shriek, grasped Mdle. de Tascher's hand, and appeared greatly agitated.

The latter laughed at her grimaces, and allowed her to proceed.

"Do you perceive, then, anything extraordinary in my countenance?"

"I do."

"Do you discover in it the traces of future happiness or misfortune?"

"Of misfortune, unquestionably, but of happiness also."

"You do not commit yourself, my worthy sibyl; your oracles are by no means clear."

"I could not venture to make them more so," said the woman, raising her eyes to heaven, with a remarkable expression of countenance.

"Tell me, however, what future prospects you predict to me?" said Josephine, whose curiosity was now awakened.

"You ask what I predict! You will not credit me if I speak out."

"I will, indeed. Now, my good woman, tell me what am I to hope or to fear?"

"You insist; listen, then, to what I have to say! You will shortly be married; this will be an unhappy union for you; you will become a widow, and afterwards . . . . you will be *Queen of France*; you will enjoy many years of happiness, but you will be killed in a popular commotion."

So saying, the woman forced herself away from the crowd that surrounded her, and hurried away as fast as her advanced age would permit.

Josephine would not allow this pretended sorceress to be laughed at for her *ridiculous prediction*; she laid great stress upon the absurdity of what she had just heard, in order to prove to the young Negro women what little credit she gave to it, and she never mentioned the matter to her family otherwise than as a joke.

Nothing, in fact, was more improbable at that time

than the bare possibility of the political convulsions we have witnessed. Mdlle. de Tascher was destined in all appearance to marry a Creole, and pass the remainder of her days in her native island.

She forgot the whole story until the moment of her losing her first husband, M. de Beauharnais, to whom she was deeply attached. He gave her many serious causes for jealousy, of which she at first complained with gentleness; finding that so far from altering his conduct, he pretended a violent passion for the woman who interfered with her happiness, Madame de Beauharnais infused into her reproaches a degree of bitterness which completely alienated the affections of a husband she was anxious to bring round. Both parties obstinately refused to yield to each other, and a separation became necessary. The Revolution happened, and M. de Beauharnais was arrested. When she heard of his being in prison she forgot all her wrongs, and resorted to every possible means of mitigating the hardship of his situation. He was deeply penetrated with the nobleness of her conduct, and wrote many affecting letters to her, recommending his children to her maternal attentions. He greatly regretted the absence of his brother,<sup>1</sup> who might have been a guide to the wife he had so much injured; his last thoughts, in short, were bestowed upon the partner of his existence.

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<sup>1</sup> M. de Beauharnais was worthy of his brother's tender affection for him; though they held opposite opinions, nothing could shake their mutual attachment. They both followed a different course of politics with an uprightness and sincerity of character from which they never deviated. M. de Beauharnais, the brother-in-law of the Empress, remained devotedly attached to her, and she retained a friendship for him which death alone interrupted. He has filled important situations with as much talent

She was also thrown into prison, and was there informed of the dreadful death of M. de Beauharnais.

"In spite of myself," she said to us, "I was constantly dwelling upon the prediction made to me; and the idea having thus grown habitual to my mind, I found less absurdity than heretofore in what had been told to me, and almost ended by considering it quite natural.

"The gaoler came one morning into the room where I slept with the Duchess d'Aiguillon<sup>1</sup> and two other ladies, and said he came to remove my hammock, which was to be given away to another prisoner.

"'Why give it away?' hastily said Madame d'Aiguillon; 'you intend, of course, to provide Madame de Beauharnais with a better one?'

"'Not at all, she will have no occasion for it,' replied the wretch, with an atrocious smile, 'since she is about to be summoned to the conciergerie, and from thence to the guillotine.'

"On hearing this, my companions in misfortune uttered the most piercing shrieks. I was endeavouring to console them to the best of my power; tired at last with their increasing lamentations, I told them that their grief was quite unreasonable, that not only I should escape death, but should become *Queen of France*.

"'Why do you not name at once the persons of your household?' angrily retorted Madame d'Aiguillon.

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as disinterestedness. Courted by old men, who find in him the exquisite politeness and manners of the ancient Court, he is no less the delight of young men, who are sure to be welcomed with kindness and indulgence. His character combines all those qualities which captivate in society, where he is at all times cheerful, witty, and obliging.

1 Afterwards Countess Louis de Girardin.

“Very true, I had quite forgotten it; well, then, my dear friend, I shall appoint you my lady of honour, depend upon it.

“The tears of those ladies now flowed more copiously than before, for they thought me raving mad when they saw my composure in that dreadful moment. I can assure you, ladies, that this was no pretended courage on my part; I was fully persuaded that the oracle would be realized.

“Madame d’Aiguillon grew faint, and I led her towards the window, which I threw open that she might breathe the fresh air; I suddenly caught sight of a poor woman who was making signs to us, which we could not understand. She was laying hold of her gown at every moment, and we were still at a loss to make out what she meant; finding that she continued, I cried out to her *Robe*, she nodded in the affirmative, and then picked up a stone, placed it in her gown, which she again laid hold of, raising the stone in the other hand. *Pierre*, I again cried out to her. Her joy was unbounded when she discovered that we at last understood her; and bringing her gown close to the stone she made quick and repeated signs of cutting her throat, and began to dance and to applaud the act. This strange pantomime excited an emotion in our minds which it is impossible to describe, as we ventured to hope that it gave us the announcement of *Robespierre’s* death.

“Whilst we were in this state of alternate fear and hope, we heard a great noise in the passage, and the formidable voice of the door-keeper, who, giving a kick to his dog, said to the animal, ‘Will you move on, then, . . . Robespierre?’ This energetic phrase proved to

us that we had nothing more to apprehend, and that France was rid of the tyrant.

"Accordingly, our companions in misfortune came in soon afterwards and gave us the details of that important event. The crisis of the 9th Thermidor had just passed away!

"My hammock was brought back to me, and I never passed a quieter night; I fell asleep, after repeating these words to my friends, 'You see that I have not been guillotined; *I shall yet be Queen of France.*' When I became Empress, I felt anxious to keep my word, and requested that Madame de Girardin might be allowed to be my lady of honour; the Emperor refused, because she had been *divorced*.<sup>1</sup>

"Such, ladies, is the exact truth respecting that celebrated prediction. I feel little alarmed at the concluding part of it; I lead here an agreeable and retired life, and do not at all interfere in politics; I do all the good in my power, and therefore hope to die quietly in my bed. It is very true that Marie Antoinette——!"

Josephine stopped short, and the conversation was made to take another turn.

Since I have just mentioned the dreadful kind of death reserved for those who were so unfortunate as to be known in the world, I will briefly advert to the worthy man whose name has acquired so painful a celebrity. M. Guillotin, a learned physician, had invented, two years before, the instrument of death

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<sup>1</sup> The Emperor relaxed at a later period from this rigid rule. Madame de Girardin was named lady of honour of Madame Joseph, the Queen of Naples. She was destined to fall to the lot of a worthy and amiable princess.

which he deemed best calculated to abridge the sufferings of the culprits condemned to forfeit their lives by the sentence of severe but just laws. His invention was laid hold of for the purpose of *dispatching* a greater number of victims. That was the expression used by a Member of the Convention.

M. Guillotin, whom I have known in his old age, was inconsolable for what he considered as an involuntary blemish in his existence. His venerable countenance bore the impress of a settled gloom, and his hair of a snowy whiteness afforded a clear indication of his mental sufferings. He had aimed at relieving the sorrows of human nature, and he unintentionally contributed to the destruction of a greater number of human beings. Had they been put to death in a less expeditious manner, the people might have been soon wearied out by those executions, which they shewed the same eagerness to behold as they would have done a theatrical representation.

## CHAPTER XXXI

FRAGMENT OF THE ACCOUNT OF A JOURNEY PERFORMED  
BY THE EMPRESS IN 1808—HER ARRIVAL AT ETAMPES  
—STRANGE PRESENT MADE TO HER—THE EMPEROR'S  
OPINION RESPECTING THE PEOPLE OF ORLEANS—M. DE  
RICCÉ—M. DE VARICOURT—BAYONNE; FÊTE GIVEN TO  
THE EMPEROR—DON PEDRO DE LAS TORRES—MDLLE.  
GUILLEBEAU

THE following brief notes are the production of Josephine, and relate to the ever-memorable journey which she performed with the Emperor at the time of the first disturbances in Spain.

It has occurred to me that my readers would be glad to learn what were her majesty's remarks upon the various places which she visited. I have made no alteration in her style.

"We leave Saint Cloud this evening, for the purpose of visiting the western part of France.

"I shall note down a few pencil observations.

"On arriving within a league and a half of Etampes, we were stopped by a crowd of young people of both sexes, some of whom presented cherries, and others roses, for our acceptance. The Emperor alighted at their village, and sent for the mayor and curate. The former is a jocular peasant, who chided the inhabitants on the nature of the presents they had offered.

“ ‘ Handsome as they are,’ said the Emperor, ‘ there is no doubt that an ear of corn and a bunch of grapes would have been more uncommon.’

“ ‘ Here are three of each kind,’ replied the country magistrate, ‘ they were plucked on the 29th of April; you will acknowledge, sire, that we have lost no time.’

“ ‘ Nature is favoured in this district,’ said the Emperor, presenting me with the nosegay; ‘ accept it, madam, and let us never forget the people of whom Providence is so mindful.’

“ ‘ Providence,’ added the curate, ‘ never fails to reward those who exert themselves, because in so doing they obey the most important of its laws.’

“ ‘ These people,’ replied the Emperor, ordering at the same time the carriage to proceed, ‘ these people cultivate flowers as well as fruits; they combine the useful with the agreeable; they deserve to succeed.’<sup>1</sup>

#### “ AT ORLEANS.

“ The National Guard was under arms and the public authorities in full costume. I perceived by the Emperor’s frowning that he was displeased.

“ ‘ It is truly painful for me,’ he said, ‘ to be obliged to speak harsh words in return for expressions of rejoicing; my reproaches, however, are not addressed to the people, but to the public authorities.

“ ‘ They perform their duties improperly; or rather, they do not perform them at all. In what manner have they applied the sums of money which I had

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<sup>1</sup> I copy these notes word for word, without pretending to explain how it was possible to have corn and grapes in a state of maturity in the month of April.

granted for the Canal? The account rendered does not satisfy my doubts, and it must be drawn up afresh. Why are the two thousand acres of the regular grants of 1805 and 1806 wholly suppressed on the account of sales? I insist upon their being replaced. The national domains have fallen off for the last eighteen months; M. le Préfect, this was the period of your administration; from that moment every transaction has become complicated; what can be the cause of it? I am well aware that there exist in this place two opinions as much opposed to the Government as they are to each other; I do not wish them to be quarrelled with; but if they should be followed by any outward acts, and those acts should bear the character of crimes, I will have no mercy for them.'

"After this reprimand the Emperor assumed a milder tone and entered into familiar conversation with the Bishop, the Mayor, the President of the Imperial Court, and even the Prefect. The latter endeavoured to justify his conduct; but if facts can be contested to a certain extent, how can they be altogether set aside? It is but too true that in these departments of the Loiret the Jacobins and emigrants have been protected by turns. There is great need of a firm though neutral administration, which should only extend its protection to those who are deserving of it; intimidate none but the factiously inclined, and secure at last a peaceful liberty by causing the laws to be respected.<sup>1</sup>

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1 The wishes of Josephine had been partly fulfilled; the people of Orleans being of a speculating turn of mind, the stagnation of trade is the greatest misfortune that could happen to them; they are indifferent to the progress of industry and the fine arts. They

## "AT BORDEAUX.

"This city exhibits two very marked opinions, wholly distinct from each other, and in an inverse ratio to those which are to be found in the greater part of France. The people in general are attached to the Revolution. The privileged classes are alone opposed to its progress, or rather, they obstruct its results. These results display themselves in strongly-cemented and liberal institutions which time, the destroyer of every thing, must have the effect of consolidating. In order to establish those institutions on the ruin of contending parties, there was need of the interference of a conqueror, who should assume the character of a legislator, and that such a legislator should continue his career of conquests. In the restoration of a state, all institutions are connected by a common link. It would not be sufficient to bind factions down by metamorphosing their passions into a community of interests; this would, at best, effect half the object in view, if neighbouring states were not made to promote those interests. In order to be master at home, and to enjoy domestic happiness and glory, it

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still complain, as they were wont to do in the days of the Republic, of the Consulate and of the Empire. Thirsting after gain, they are never satisfied with what they have acquired, and always look forward to a new order of things which might possibly be productive of results better calculated to gratify their impatient eagerness for wealth. If the Government were to be altered, they would still be dissatisfied. Such is the peculiarity of their character. Nevertheless, the prudent administration of the Viscount de Riccé, their Prefect, and the exhortations of their former bishop, M. de Varicourt, whose memory is deservedly held in veneration, have greatly contributed to allay the discontent; and everything induces the belief, that this city, which has always proved faithful, notwithstanding its habits of complaining, will return to those sentiments that animated it in former times.

is necessary to remove all apprehension of your neighbours setting fire to your habitations, or even to their own, as well as to banish all dread of a lawsuit for a party-wall. What are the means to be employed in order to compel them to adopt a prudent course of conduct? They should first of all be compelled to submit, and when they shall have been made to feel and acknowledge your superiority, you should hold out to them a fraternal and protecting hand whose guardianship may calm their fears without humbling their pride. This mutual attitude will create a reciprocal bond of confidence, respect, and affection. If, however, in the interior of those habitations, some egotists, instead of attending to the common defence, to the consolidation of the general establishment, should surreptitiously withdraw their resources to bestow them upon objects of local interest and of a private nature, are they not to be held up as enemies of that plan of general welfare which they find to interfere with their private views? Too narrow-minded to see beyond them, too near-sighted, too deficient in penetration to read into futurity, they would sacrifice everything to a present object, to the present moment, which necessarily undermines the future, when from a want of foresight and proper economy it fails to secure it. This doctrine, of which the Emperor has made the application to France, has been greeted with applause by that devoted France which was not slow in perceiving that a moment of changes, of trials and repairs, neither was nor could be the period of enjoyments.

“‘We are sowing to-day in tears and blood,’ said the Emperor to me; ‘liberty will be our harvest. This is what a spirit of mercantile egotism obscures from the

sight of the people of Bordeaux. In an inverse ratio to the remainder of the Empire, the people here are opposed to the new institutions. It only sees one obstacle, not to commerce in general, but to its own trade. It is quite indifferent to the happiness of to-morrow; it merely seeks for to-day's profit.'

"A few facts have confirmed these observations. On our way to the theatre we heard very few applauses from the crowd out of doors; within the theatre, on the contrary, they were loud and long continued.

"The port presents a magnificent *coup d'œil*. The ships were dressed with a variety of flags, and fired minute guns. The artillery of the fort returned the salute. The whole population was in motion, and appeared cheerful in spite of its discontented opinions. The confusion of cries, of songs, of movements and costumes, presented a delightful picture. We particularly noticed a basque dance, formed of three hundred young people of both sexes, with short brown jackets, blue trousers, red sashes, and straw hats decorated with ribbons and nosegays, who, dancing to the sound of instruments—castanets and tambourines—rushed forward, whirled about, and skipped with no less swiftness than elegance.

"To-morrow we take our departure for Bayonne.

#### "AT BAYONNE.

"At the distance of two leagues from this town, the Emperor was presented with a sight truly worthy of him. On the side of a mountain gradually descending to a slope is to be seen one of those camps which the protecting genius of the country has erected for the retreat

of its defenders. It consists of seven pretty habitations of different forms and aspects, isolated from each other and surrounded with fruitful orchards and well-stocked poultry-yards. They have a greater or less quantity of arable land attached to them at stated distances, which were sown with different kinds of grain, according to the nature of the soil. The mountain is guarded on one side by rocks hewn in a fantastic manner, to which are suspended plants and flowers presenting to the eye a variety of colours. The other side of the mountain appeared as if covered with rich carpets, that illusion being produced by the different colours of the plants cultivated upon it. An evergreen forest crowns the crest of this mountain, the basis of which is watered by a small river softly gliding through a narrow, deep, and verdant bed. An elegant bridge thrown across the river facilitates the communication of the camp with the town; and a few tents erected on the bank, on the Bayonne side of the river, serve as a fortification to the dwellings and an ornament to the green field that surrounds them. This is the spot in front of those tents where the veterans who occupy them have given to the Emperor a small fête which partook of a rural and a military character. The wives, the daughters, the children of these gallant soldiers, formed its most pleasing attraction, as they themselves were its chief ornament. In the midst of their pile of arms were seen shrubs loaded with flowers; and whilst the mountains resounded with the lowing of the flocks, the air repeated the echoing songs of veterans, delighted at again beholding their chief amongst them. Their enthusiasm knew no bounds when the Emperor sat down to their military and pastoral repast, and

drank with those gallant men who had one and all exposed their lives in defence of his cause.

“Toasts were drunk to the success of every object dear to Frenchmen : to the country, to glory, to liberty ! Modesty prevents my recording the marked attentions shewn to me. They have made an indelible impression upon my mind, for I consider them as a reflection of the respect which France has devoted to the Emperor.

“An important personage was waiting at Bayonne the Emperor’s arrival : this was Don Pedro de las Torres, special envoy of Don Juan d’Escoïquiz, the preceptor of the Prince of Asturias. After the events of Aranjuez, the latter had been proclaimed King under the name of Ferdinand VII. ; but the old King Charles, whose abdication was wrung from him by fear, now protests against his abdication. The new monarch pretends that his father, influenced by the Queen, who is herself led by the Prince of the Peace, never had, nor could have, any will of his own. Nevertheless, the nation is in a state of alarm, and divided between the two sovereigns. If the one party make it a reproach to Charles that he resigned his will to Don Manuel Godoy (Prince of the Peace), the other party imputes to Ferdinand that he never followed any other dictates than those of Don Juan d’Escoïquiz. The former, who is proud and insolent, oppresses his master and degrades the nation ; the latter, a *whining*, deceitful man, imposes upon the nation, and subjects his pupil to his views. Spain may well accuse them of her past and present misfortunes.

“What can be more deplorable, in fact, than the relative situation of the governors and the governed. There is a total absence of confidence on the one side, and of

affection on the other. In the midst of these contending parties, which may well be termed parricidal factions, a third party insinuates itself, which calculates upon their misunderstanding, perhaps promotes it, and aims at introducing the reign of liberty !

“Is ignorant and superstitious Spain, however, in a condition to receive this beneficial improvement ? How is it possible, with her proud aristocracy, her fanatical priesthood, and her indolent population, to accomplish an object which presupposes the love of equality, the practice of toleration, and an heroic spirit of active industry ?

“This is what the Emperor will have to consider. All parties call upon him as a mediator ; he arrives among them without knowing their respective characters, and as a man he feels a perfect indifference for them all. His enlightened policy will take council from the laws of necessity ; and in this mighty dispute in which he will be called upon to act as umpire, he will conciliate what he owes to the interests of France with what is imperiously required by the welfare of Spain.

“This Don Pedro de las Torres has not been sent without a motive. Don Juan, his employer, was aware that he possesses, at a short distance from Bayonne, a spacious farm on which he rears numerous flocks of Merino sheep. This is the place to which we were invited under some plausible pretext. At the conclusion of a splendid rural repast we walked round his habitation. At the bottom of a verdant neck of land, bordered on all sides by rocks lined with moss and roses, we beheld on a sudden a picturesque cottage slightly suspended on a projecting rock, with seven or eight hundred sheep

of the finest species around it. We could not resist an exclamation of surprise, and upon the Emperor's addressing his compliments to Don Pedro, this nobleman assured him that those flocks were our property.

“‘The King, my master,’ he added, ‘is well aware of the predilection of her majesty the Empress for rural occupations, and as this species of sheep, so little known in France, might now prove the chief ornament of a farm, as it would hereafter prove its chief wealth, he requests that your majesty will not reject an offer which may be equally acceptable and useful to the French nation.’

“‘Don Pedro,’ replied the Emperor in a severe tone of voice, ‘the Empress can only accept a present from the hands of a king, and your master does not yet wear the kingly title. Postpone offering it to her until your nation and I shall have pronounced.’ The remainder of the visit became purely ceremonious.

“We reside at the Castle of Marac, where an occurrence has just taken place which is exceedingly painful to my feelings, for I always dread any act of violence on the part of the Emperor, as so many people are disposed to exaggerate his errors and defects, and endeavour to lessen the merit of his good actions. What I am about to relate will afford matter for a variety of stories, the bare anticipation of which is distressing to me.

“I have brought with me, as my ladies of honour, the Duchess de Bassano, the Countess de Montmorency, and the beautiful Mdle. Guillebeau as my reader<sup>1</sup>;

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<sup>1</sup> Mdle. Guillebeau was the daughter of a banker who had failed. Her great beauty attracted the Emperor's notice at one of the city balls. He enquired into the condition of her parents, promised to

having but lately received the appointment, she was still intoxicated with this mark of favour, and assumed a highly unbecoming and insolent manner towards those two ladies, who complained to me of a conduct to which they were unaccustomed. I prevailed upon them to forgive errors which were to be ascribed to her unexpected rise and extreme youth, and I promised at the same time to chide Mdlle. Guillebeau. Accordingly, I made some representations to her which she did not take amiss, and which she promised to attend to. I am at a loss to discover how the Emperor came to be informed of this little piece of vexation; but he was so displeased at it that he ordered Mdlle. Guillebeau to return immediately to Paris with MM. de Beaumont and Monaco. I felt anxious to provide her at least with a *femme de chambre*, in order to soften the unpleasantness of this precipitate journey; but the Emperor requested, in a tone of ill humour, that his orders should be *strictly* carried into effect. I was therefore under the necessity of seeing this young lady take her departure with these two gentlemen, and without any female attendant. She never ceased crying the whole of the journey, and never afterwards resumed her place in my household."

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I have been unable to procure the concluding part of these notes; but the short specimens I have obtained and presented to the readers sufficiently attest the

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be of service to them, and appointed her to be reader to the Empress. Her sister received a similar appointment near the Princess Eliza, who procured for her an highly advantageous match. Mdlle. Guillebeau, the Empress's reader, married M. Sourdeau, a consul at Tangier, and not at Smyrna, as is asserted in the *Contemporaine*. She died a short time ago.

correct judgment of the Empress, and her strong attachment to the Emperor, facts so obstinately denied with the perpetual assurance that she was only attached to the supreme power to which he had raised her. Those who make these assertions have probably never been personally acquainted with her majesty. I always found her penetrated with the deepest gratitude towards the Emperor, and ready at all times to prove her affection for him by every sacrifice that depended upon her.

## CHAPTER XXXII

UNACCOUNTABLE DISTURBANCE IN HER MAJESTY'S HOUSEHOLD—HER DISPLEASURE AT THE CIRCUMSTANCE—M. DE MONACO—PARTICULARS RESPECTING THE DUKE D'ENGHIEN — THE INFERNAL MACHINE — GENERALS MACDONALD AND NANSOUTY—INSTITUTION OF THE LEGION OF HONOUR—SAYING OF GENERAL MOREAU ON THE SUBJECT—MADAME DE NANSOUTY

THE Empress called one morning upon Madame d'Arberg, who was confined by illness to her room. She was in a state bordering upon anger; and we were so unaccustomed to see her thrown out of her usual composure that we felt much surprised at her agitation of mind. She told us that she had just had a warm discussion with her chief steward, who insisted that it was impossible to have fewer than *twenty-two tables* separately served, as there was in the lower class of her household a gradation of rank infinitely more remarkable than in her majesty's saloon.

"Can you imagine, ladies, anything equal to the wasteful extravagance to which I am thus exposed? Is it possible that the cooks should refuse to eat with the kitchen-maids and scullions? the servants who scrub the floors with those who light the fires? As the ladies who announce the company do not dine at my table, your waiting-maids conceive it to be beneath

their dignity to sit down to dinner with them. In short, I am ruined by such ante-chamber etiquette. Madame d'Arberg, all this must be set to rights."

This lady promised to give her best attention to the matter; nevertheless she could only succeed in reducing six tables—*sixteen* were constantly kept up. This was an unaccountable number, considering that the footmen and stable boys were not supported in the palace.

The waste of wood at Navarre almost exceeds belief; twenty-one loads in winter time, and twelve chaldrons of coals, were daily consumed. Our apartments were large beyond all proportion, and the chimneys, which had not been altered since the Revolution, were so large and spacious that one might stand upright in them with the greatest ease. Whole stumps of trees were thrown in; the Empress always recommended that we should take care to keep out the cold. But in spite of the immense fires lighted, we were perishing in every part of the house, except on the ground floor, which was inhabited by her majesty. A mild and even temperature was kept up in them by pipes for conveying heat, which proceeded from stoves fixed in the cellars of the building.

The Empress was constantly intent upon the means of providing every comfort which the palace could afford, and always felt apprehensive lest a sense of delicacy should prevent application being made for what might be deemed requisite or useful. She was greatly annoyed at the furniture being so old and uncomfortable; but she had purchased it without a previous examination. As she placed the utmost dependence upon M. Pierlot, she

had felt no hesitation in relying upon his choice. The purchase was agreed to for the sum of 100,000 francs, and when she came for the purpose of taking possession, she saw nothing better than arm-chairs with torn covers, broken tables, and curtains in tatters. It was found necessary to order cart-loads of furniture from Paris; nevertheless, many articles were still wanting, which were purchased by degrees. The furniture of her majesty's apartment was tasteful and quite new, but exceedingly plain.

M. de Monaco, the present Duke of Valentinois, had fitted up his own apartment with greater attention to nicety than anyone else in the household. He was feared by all those who were dependent upon him. His immediate attendants always styled him *prince*, an affectation which subjected him to general animadversion, as he could only claim the title of *count*, which the Emperor had conferred upon him. Whenever he undertook a journey to Paris, he travelled in one of her majesty's carriages, drawn by six horses, with an out-rider and a courier before him. Madame d'Arberg and M. de Beaumont were far more unpretending, though they held the first situations in the household. The Empress ridiculed this foolish pride, but she never took the trouble to remind him that his family no longer enjoyed the privilege of striking a few pieces of coin, or of raising three armed men. She merely laughed at such petty whims, which were redeemed by a thorough knowledge of every detail connected with her service. She was aware that he was suffering from the consequences of some severe wounds he had received in battles in which he had greatly distinguished himself;

this motive sufficiently pleaded his excuse; and when at a later period she was under the necessity of dispensing with his attendance upon her, as I shall have occasion to relate, she deeply regretted his loss.

It was a source of unfeigned mortification for her to be obliged to convey a reprimand; her excessive gentleness of temper was often abused in trifles; fortunately, however, this could not be the case in matters of greater importance, thanks to Madame d'Arberg, who had acquired a well-merited ascendancy over her. When her influence was inadequate to the object of preventing what was calculated to affect her majesty's interests, Madame d'Arberg addressed herself to the Emperor, who always agreed in opinion with her, being well aware of the excessive weakness of the Empress whenever it was a question of her private affairs, or of punishing anyone who had been guilty of misconduct. She was sometimes displeased at being thus thwarted in her inclinations; but she soon felt how undeserved was her anger towards a person sincerely devoted to her service; she would then exert the most graceful and persuasive means to dispel the transient cloud which had affected Madame d'Arberg's serenity of temper. The latter felt grateful for Josephine's endeavours to make her forget any slight act of injustice, and the two *friends* grew more than ever attached to each other. I repeat that her majesty was exclusively indebted to Madame d'Arberg for the strict regularity established in her household.

The conversation in presence of the Empress turned upon the ever to be deplored event which plunged France into sorrow, and tarnished the glory of Napoleon. We

formed a select circle on that occasion, and she lamented with deep regret her not having had it in her power to prevent the catastrophe.

“The Emperor,” she said, “was cruelly advised; he never would of his own accord have entertained the thought of such an attempt; once resolved upon, nothing could any longer oppose its being carried into execution, owing to the Emperor’s apprehension of his being accused of pusillanimity, but I am persuaded that he has more than once deplored his having been *too readily* obeyed. There are certain circumstances which *I am bound to abstain from mentioning*, in order to spare from infamy the names of the real authors of the Duke d’Enghien’s death; *history will hereafter speak out*, and the truth will be made known. General Moreau, however, was the innocent cause of that sanguinary adventure.

“In the course of conversation with him, Napoleon asked certain questions respecting the Bourbons, and whether there was to be found a single warlike character in that family?

“‘Certainly, General, they are all men of personal courage! The Duke d’Enghien is, moreover, an excellent officer, and is adored by his soldiers; he is a worthy scion of the branch of Condé.’

“‘Is he ambitious?’

“‘I am unable to answer that question, but from his gallant conduct on the field of battle he seems to aim at a renown which cannot confine itself to the object of serving at a distance from his native country.’

“This eulogium,” added Josephine, “was a source of uneasiness to the Emperor, who frequently reverted to the subject. With the view of calming his appre-

hensions, the perpetration of a crime was proposed to him. I must ever hold in abhorrence those who drove him to it; *they have proved his greatest enemies!* ”

She assured us that M. de Caulaincourt was perfectly ignorant of the nature of the orders of which he was the bearer; he only learned their contents on his arrival at Ettenheim, and was in a state of despair at being directed to arrest the Duke d'Enghien; but he was so closely watched that he was unable to retrace his steps, and was compelled to obey. Feeling, however, an enthusiastic attachment for his master, he deemed him quite incapable of an action which would have the effect of weakening the general admiration in which he was held; accordingly, when Napoleon informed him in his closet that the Duke d'Enghien had been shot, M. de Caulaincourt fell senseless to the ground.

Josephine and General Berthier were present; the latter, to avoid being asked any questions, went immediately in search of assistance. M. de Caulaincourt's grief knew no bounds, and he *bitterly* accused the Emperor for having entrusted him with that dreadful mission. It was to have been confided to M. Auguste de Colbert, who, fortunately for him, had gone to the opera without leaving word at his residence where he was to be found, and every enquiry after him proved unsuccessful; anxious to give effect to the orders which were represented to him as requisite to secure his repose, Napoleon gave the fatal commission to M. de Caulaincourt, who happened to be in his way. An incredible fatality attended him in the whole business. What I have just related is nearly *word for word* what Josephine mentioned to us.

We also questioned her concerning the event of the 3rd Nivose. The infernal machine had been so well contrived that Napoleon was indebted for his life to the violent rate at which he was driven by his coachman, who was drunk. Madame Murat, whose carriage was to have followed immediately after her brother, was preserved from death owing to a contrary cause.

General Lauriston was relating an entertaining story, and as the ladies wished to hear it out they were in no hurry to proceed; two or three minutes elapsed, and the explosion took place just as they entered the Place du Carrousel. Every glass of Madame Murat's carriage was broken by the effect of the explosion. She was pregnant of her eldest son, and experienced such a shock that the child was born of a very delicate frame. The epileptic attacks to which he is subject are to be ascribed to this circumstance. The explosion took place in the interval between the two carriages.

Napoleon still proceeded on his way, and repaired to the opera, where the splendid oratorio of *The Creation*<sup>1</sup> was to be performed for the first time. He was greeted with loud and unanimous applause. He felt the deepest anxiety for the fate of his sister, who only arrived a quarter of an hour after him, her alarm having compelled her to return to the Tuileries. The cause of the extraordinary report which had been heard was already known at the theatre, and Madame Murat was enthusiastically received when she made her appearance.

The whole city was indignant at such an attempt, which not only threatened the life of Bonaparte's family, but devoted a multitude of people to certain death.

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<sup>1</sup> By Haydn.

Fresh details were brought in every moment respecting that dreadful catastrophe; hundreds of persons were mentioned as having fallen victims to it. Numberless arrests took place; and the police, which was already sufficiently strict, became so much more severe that people were apprehensive of conversing in the streets. I am persuaded that many persons who were implicated in the trial were totally ignorant of the means by which it had been attempted to get rid of the Consul.

Georges Cadoudal, a man devoted to the cause he had espoused, and prepared to suffer death in endeavouring to rescue his country from usurpation, and to restore the throne to its legitimate sovereign, had not, however, the resolution to act the part of an assassin. Having on one occasion assumed the disguise of a disabled soldier, and watching on the Pont-des-Arts until Bonaparte should pass, he had it in his power to execute the project he had formed, as the Consul entered into a long conversation with him; his dagger was in readiness for the deed, but his resolution failed him. This hesitation caused the misfortune of upwards of two hundred families.

The Empress, who was partial to General Moreau, and knew how much he was beloved by the army, trembled with apprehension at the possibility of sentence of death being pronounced against him; the tribunal did not venture to extend a measure of such severity to him. The example of Generals Macdonald and Nansouty,<sup>1</sup> who had the courage in an open sitting of

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<sup>1</sup> The Emperor retained for a long time an unfavourable impression against those two generals: they remained unemployed, and proved by their conduct in the field at a later period how un-

the court to bestow upon their captive friend public marks of the tenderest affection, was followed by several others of his companions in arms. It was found necessary to consult the feelings of men whose services were needed at every moment for securing, by dint of glorious achievements, what had been denied to justice and equity. The ruling power, therefore, merely sentenced a great captain to banishment, feeling persuaded that French levity would soon cause him to be totally forgotten. It is well known that the gendarmes, when he passed before them to repair to the bench of the accused, invariably presented arms.

A short time before this disastrous occurrence, when the Legion of Honour was about to be created, Moreau was apprised that there was no doubt of his receiving the grand cross of that order.

"I am not acquainted with any legion of honour, except the army," replied the general, "and I have long formed part of it. I have no more claim to the cross you allude to than the rest of my companions in arms ;

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fortunate it was for the service that a feeling of animosity should have operated as a bar to the employment of two such distinguished officers. At the time of the formation of her household, the Empress requested that Madame de Nansouty might be appointed one of her ladies of honour. "Her husband is too poor," replied the Emperor.—"Sire, this is the best encomium upon his conduct ; it depended upon him to acquire wealth in Hanover ; he abstained from doing so."—"So much the worse for him ; I had sent him there for that purpose. I wish to have women at the palace who may adorn my court by their appearance and the splendour of their attire." It was found impossible to make him retract his determination ; Madame de Nansouty was not appointed a lady of honour. Some years afterwards the Emperor did justice to the distinguished talents and dignified character of General Nansouty, and attached him to his person in the capacity of his first equerry.

I will never, therefore, accept of it. I am opposed to every kind of privileges."

These words were reported to Napoleon, who foresaw from that moment that he would find in Moreau a censor of all the projects he meditated for the future; he never forgave him a spirit of opposition in which that general stood alone against him. Those who had solicited and obtained the decoration felt offended with Moreau's conduct, which conveyed a censure upon their own; the unsuccessful candidates, on the contrary, adopted his opinion, and thus formed themselves into a party, which the enemies of his splendid fame represented to the Consul as calculated to produce dangerous consequences. Josephine interpreted in this manner the dissension that sprung up between two men who were worthy of entertaining for each other a mutual esteem.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

THE EMPRESS ALLUDES TO THE TIME OF HER PECUNIARY  
DISTRESS — MESDAMES DUMOULIN AND MONTMORIN—  
MADAME TALLIEN—JOSEPHINE'S LETTER—UNGRATEFUL  
CONDUCT OF THE MARCHIONESS OF \* \* \*—CHARMING  
REPLY OF MADAME TALLIEN—MADAME DE BOUFFLERS—  
M. DE SABRAN—MDLLE. THERMIDOR TALLIEN—SAYING  
OF TALLIEN

THE Empress often spoke of the time in which she had been in distressed circumstances; she always entertained a grateful recollection of the services rendered to her at that period. She had been most affected by the attentions shewn to her by Madame Dumoulin, a wealthy and benevolent lady, and felt great delight in often adverting to the subject. At the period of the general scarcity, Madame de Beauharnais dined every day at the house of that excellent lady, who regularly invited a small circle of friends of very limited fortune; each guest brought her own bread, which was at that time an object of luxury.

Aware that Madame de Beauharnais was in more distressed circumstances than the rest, Madame Dumoulin dispensed with this practice in her favour, thereby justifying the expression of the latter, that she received *her daily bread* from her. Madame de Montmorin, who

formed part of that society, took a great liking to a person for whom it was impossible not to feel an affection, and procured her every article of wearing apparel of which she stood in need. The Empress afterwards treated her in that friendly manner which sufficiently indicated that her majesty was not prone to forget.

She often spoke, likewise, of her affection for Madame Tallien. The Emperor would never allow Josephine to receive her at the Tuileries; but I have no doubt that she secretly saw her at Malmaison. She was compelled to throw over these visits the cloak of mystery, as Napoleon would have been displeased at them; if they ever came to his knowledge, he feigned ignorance, his object being answered if the Empress should not openly transgress his injunctions. The intimacy subsisting between these two celebrated women was of an early date. The following letter of the Empress will afford some idea of her lively turn of mind at a time when her position was far from being enviable.

“TO MADAME TALLIEN.

“A splendid evening party at Thelusson’s residence forms the present topic of conversation; I do not ask you, my dear friend, if you intend to be there. The fête would be very insipid without you. I write to request you will appear in that peach-blossom dress you are so fond of, and to which I am no less partial than yourself; I intend to wear the same. As I think it of importance that our head-dresses should in all respects be alike, I now state for your information that

I propose wearing a red handkerchief in my hair, tied in the Creole fashion, with three locks on each side of the head. That which is a presumption on my part is quite natural on yours, as you are younger, and if not handsomer, still of a much fresher complexion. You perceive I do justice to everyone. We are, however, attempting a bold thrust, and must drive the *trois Bichons*, and the *Bretelles Anglaises*<sup>1</sup> to despair. You fully understand the importance of this conspiracy, the necessity for secrecy, and the wonderful effects which must attend it. Farewell, until to-morrow; I rely upon you."

Madame Tallien rendered an essential service to France, by contributing to rescue it from thralldom. She possessed at one time a very powerful influence, of which she availed herself to save the lives of many individuals doomed to destruction. The following anecdote will prove the extent of her zeal in the cause of humanity, and her obliging disposition.

The Marchioness de — was kept concealed for *three weeks* in Madame Tallien's private apartment, unknown to her very *femme de chambre*; she attended upon her with as much care as if she had been accustomed to the meanest domestic employments, at a time when she bore the palm of unrivalled beauty, and was the object of general admiration and of the most extravagant praise. She secretly removed from her table what was necessary to support her prisoner, or brought in provisions from out of doors, which she carefully concealed under her shawl.

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<sup>1</sup> Names applied to certain persons in society. The latter was meant for a handsome Englishwoman, who was afterwards called Madame B. V—.

Such unheard-of precautions and difficulties were attended with the gratifying result of the Marchioness de — being restored to liberty, and reinstated in a portion of her property. Nothing could exceed for a time the gratitude of the lady she had so essentially served. She was eager to express it on all occasions, and felt no hesitation at importuning *her friend and benefactress* by frequent applications. Bonaparte seized upon the supreme power; Madame Tallien lost her influence, and was no longer favoured from that moment with the visits of the person upon whom she was justified in relying as if she had been a sister. She was deeply affected at so revolting a mark of ingratitude, and complained of it to a friend, who, on learning the cause of her disappointment, called upon the Marchioness de — to make her devise some excuse for her absence, and to recommend her calling upon a lady who had saved her life.

“This is most assuredly my intention, sir. I hold ingratitude in abhorrence, am greatly indebted to Madame Tallien, and am ready to prove my gratitude by calling upon her. She must be sensible, however, that I owe some consideration to my family, and out of regard to my character I am compelled to act with a degree of circumspection which is painful to my feelings. Ask her at what hour I may find her alone, and I will instantly call upon her.”

The officious meddler, who had adopted a course which was attended with such little success, thought proper to complete his self-assumed mission, and reported to Madame Tallien what were the intentions of Madame de —.

"Tell her," replied Madame Tallien, "that I sincerely regret my inability to receive her, as I am never alone, and am constantly surrounded by those to whom it has been my good fortune to be of service."

Madame de — took the hint, and never returned to a house which had proved an asylum to her at a time when death was generally the reward of an act of compassion.

If it be painful to record traits of this nature, there is some consolation in contrasting them with a praiseworthy action. Madame de Boufflers, the wife of one of our wittiest songsters, had contracted a debt of gratitude towards Madame Tallien. She was constant in her attendance upon the latter, and contributed by her wit to the charms of a cheerful conversation. She was accompanied by her husband and her son, M. Elzéar de Sabran, to whom I have already had occasion to allude. They declined every invitation that might have interfered with their visits to Madame Tallien. The conduct of a family so generally esteemed was applauded by everyone. Gratitude should on no occasion assume a disguise. The anxiety to raise in public opinion the object towards whom that feeling is entertained is calculated to confer honour and self-esteem.<sup>1</sup>

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1 The Empress preserved with great care a collection of letters from Madame Tallien and several other celebrated characters. I believe she was the person who brought into fashion the collection of autographs. I have seen a very curious collection of the kind, which contains amongst others a letter of Lucien Bonaparte, dated from the prison at Aix, where he had just been confined as a *terrorist*. Mesdames Letitia and Eliza Bonaparte added their solicitations to those of Lucien in separate letters. Those autograph letters which are in the possession of the Countess de Bradi are intended to be published by her with brief notes. As I am on intimate terms with

The Empress defrayed the expenses of the education of Mdlle. Tallien, whose Christian name was Thermidor. She is now Countess de Pelet, and is said to possess as playful a wit as her mother, the present Princess de Chimay.

On learning the marriage of the latter, M. Tallien said: "In spite of herself, she will ever be Madame Tallien. This name will always obtain more celebrity for her than the title of Princess of *Chimera*."

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Madame de Bradi, my praises might be considered as exaggerated, if I stated my opinion of her talents; I may, however, be allowed to say that no person is better qualified than she is to convey a character of interest to such a publication. I find some consolation in checking the expression of my sentiments of friendship for the Countess of Bradi, when I reflect that her works are in the hands of the public, and that the merits of that unassuming and excellent lady are duly appreciated.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

THE EMPRESS IS DESIROUS OF LEARNING THE ORIGIN OF  
THE FORTUNE OF M. PORTALÈS—ADVENTURE OF THE  
HERRING FISHERY—THE SONS OF M. PORTALÈS —  
PRESENT FROM THEIR FATHER — MADAME GUIZOT —  
COUNTESS GRABOWSKA

THE Empress expressed a desire to learn how M. Portalès, the father of her equerry, had succeeded in acquiring his immense fortune, as he was well known to have begun life as a pedlar. She was told the following details, which are sufficiently curious to merit a place in my recollections. Everything is interesting that relates in any way to an honest man.

M. Portalès was a native of Neuchâtel, in Switzerland. Born of worthy but indigent parents, he received from his father a small sum of money with which he purchased a variety of articles in use among the peasantry. He travelled in this manner about the country, leading a frugal life, and increasing his trade in proportion as his profits allowed him the means of so doing.

The proofs he had given of his capacity for business, his undeviating probity, his strict adherence to his engagements, and the correctness of his private life, induced some merchants to interest themselves in his welfare; they confided their merchandize to his care, and thereby gave such extension to his means of carrying on business,

that he was soon under the necessity of procuring a horse to carry his stock of goods, which had become too heavy for his shoulders.

After the lapse of a few years the petty tradesman set up a gig in which he repaired to all the fairs, making moderate profits, but never embarking in doubtful speculations. When he had completely reimbursed all the advances made to him, he set to work with his own funds, and soon found himself possessed of a fortune which could only go on increasing, as the reputation he enjoyed was calculated to favour all his undertakings. Matters went so far that no business of any importance was entered into without his participating in it. He engaged a few clerks and opened a banking-house, without, however, allowing of any augmentation to his personal expenses.

When he had cause to be satisfied with any young man in his service, he gave him a share in his speculations. To have learned commercial business under M. Portalès was always a powerful recommendation, and offered ready means of forming an establishment. Several bankers, M. Hottinguer amongst the rest, were indebted to him for their fortunes.

Previously to the Revolution M. Portalès constantly repaired to Amsterdam for the purpose of attending the sales of the company. If his arrival happened to be delayed by any unexpected occurrence, the sales were generally suspended for one or two days. It happened on one occasion that the whole of the herring fishery was purchased in his absence. This is an object of great importance in Holland, as the herrings are forwarded from that country to all parts of the world.

M. Portalès arrived at the moment when the sale was concluded, and all his competitors apologized for having omitted to give him a share in the commercial operation.

"There is no harm done, gentlemen; I am very sure you will not do so another time."

He immediately hurried off with a few clerks to all the coopers and purchased every barrel in the place. The herrings arrived; the purchasers proceeded to secure the barrels requisite for packing them up, and received for answer that M. Portalès had bought and paid for every one. As, however, the boats were entering the port in regular succession, the merchants were at a loss how to dispose of the immense quantity of herrings which were unloaded on the quays, and were compelled to apply to the monopoliser of barrels. He gained a hundred per cent. on that speculation, and took great delight in relating it as a boyish trick, which served as a lesson to the whole trading community; they never embarked any more in such speculations without his being allowed to participate in them.

He married a wife of a disposition congenial to his own, and had three sons by her, to whom he procured a finished education, which was not thrown away upon them. One son only felt a *vocation* for his father's business. The eldest never quitted Neufchâtel. The second established himself in Paris, where he spent large sums of money in eager pursuit of the fine arts, which he cultivates and patronizes; it was only in obedience to his father's wishes that he attended to book-keeping, accounts current, and the like. He infinitely preferred visiting the shops of our celebrated painters and sculptors; travelling to Italy for the

purpose of admiring the ruins of all ancient monuments, which recall such glorious recollections to mind, and surrounding himself with poets and musicians. In a word, he carried on business as an amateur, and attended as an artist to every object calculated to elevate the soul and delight the heart. The youngest son expressed a decided predilection for a military life; nothing could ever shake his inflexible determination on the subject. He distinguished himself in the most perilous campaigns of the Empire, obtained promotion, and was named equerry to Josephine, when, satiated with glory, he felt anxious to enjoy some repose.

The two last-mentioned sons were constantly annoying their father for money; vexed at being so often called upon to provide for what he termed their *nonsensical trifles*, he one day called his three sons together, and after a long sermon upon the necessity of economising and providing for the future, he told them that feeling annoyed at having always his purse in his hand for their gratification, he preferred giving them, once for all, wherewith to enable them to dispense, for a long time, with his assistance.

"You have here," he added in an angry tone, "a portfolio containing 9,000,000 of francs in notes; divide them in equal portions amongst you; and let me hear no more of you until the hour of my death."

The man who evinced such readiness in distributing an enormous sum of money was exceedingly penurious in his private habits, having no other attendants than a cook, and a man-servant to take care of his only horse. His children were under the necessity of giving him timely notice when they wished to dine with him; were

it not for this precaution, they would have found nothing to eat.

Whenever he returned home, he took off his great coat to avoid wearing out his sleeves whilst in the act of writing, and only treated himself to a single candle; in short, every ridiculous story that is related of Harpagon is a faithful description of the habits of M. Portalès. Nevertheless, this very man was always ready to advance thirty or forty thousand francs to anyone whom he might deem worthy of his confidence, and to open a credit for him with his correspondents. He was passionately attached to his native town, and having considered that an hospital was essentially necessary for the indigent class of society, which he always sought to relieve, he sent for an architect to draw the plan of the most commodious establishment of the kind which he could devise, purchased the ground, and built the Hospital Portalès, which cost him 900,000 francs, including the funds placed in deposit in order to realise the income requisite for providing medicines and attendance.

A road from Neufchâtel to Saint Gall was deemed indispensable; but the cantons of Neufchâtel and of Saint Gall had not the means of cutting it, although such a road was calculated to give a great impulse to their reciprocal trade; M. Portalès took the whole expense upon himself. It may assuredly be permitted to an individual to lead a parsimonious life when his savings are employed in *such fancies*. Switzerland could likewise boast of her Beaujon. The properties of both were acquired by assiduous attention to business, and partly applied to the relief of the distressed. Such men are but too scarce, and seldom find imitators; this, at least,

may be said, that all are agreed in admiring their noble conduct.

M. Portalès was much displeased at the desire felt by his sons to dignify by a title of nobility a name respected all over Europe.

"I am the first merchant in the world," said he to Josephine; "they will be the lowest on the list of French counts! I prefer my title to theirs."

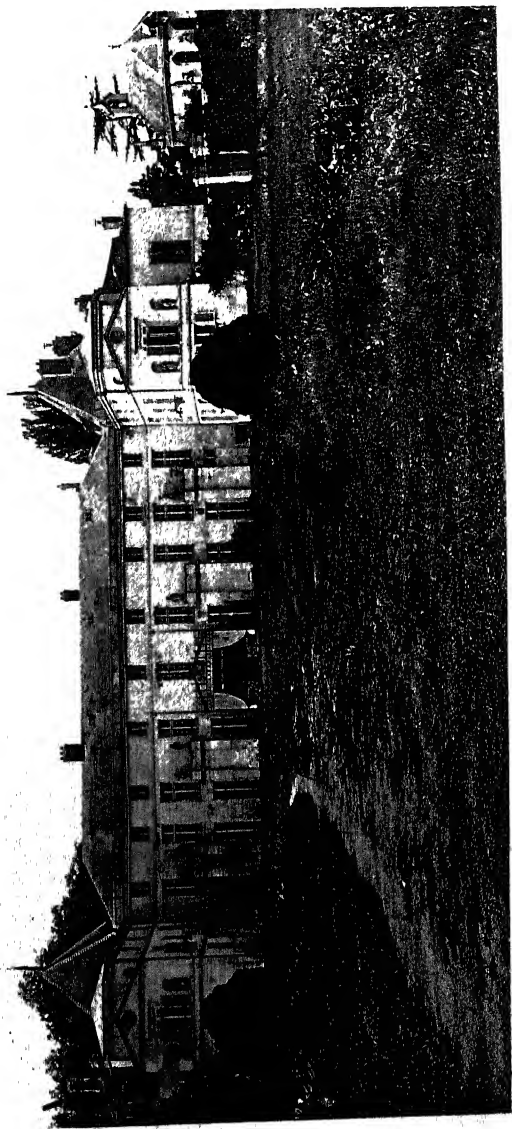
He left a considerable fortune notwithstanding his numerous legacies to the churches and the poor of his native country. I have never known him, and the above details were communicated to me by the Empress herself who entertained the highest respect for him; she never alluded to the avaricious disposition which was made a matter of reproach to M. de Portalès, but as affording her the opportunity of dwelling upon his numerous benefactions. When she entertained a regard for anyone she felt great delight in alluding to those qualities which had excited that sentiment in her breast.

This was the language she held to us respecting the praiseworthy conduct of her chamberlain, M. Turpin de Crissé, who had supported his mother and sister during the emigration by means of his well-known talent for painting. They alone communicated what would have always remained a secret had it depended upon M. de Turpin's inclination. So far from priding himself upon what he did, he was always vexed and mortified whenever the circumstance was mentioned in his presence. As he deemed it quite natural that he should impose privations upon himself in order to afford comforts to the objects of his affection, he was at a loss to understand how such an act should be noticed, and immediately quoted various examples of similar attach-

*THE CHÂTEAU MALMAISON*



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ment with the view of lessening the merit of his own conduct.

He alluded more particularly to Mdlle. de Meulan (afterwards Madame Guizot) who, notwithstanding her weak and delicate health, deprived herself of rest in order to compose for the press the articles which she wrote for insertion in the *Publiciste*, a publication much in vogue twenty years ago for all matters connected with literature. She had to read the works which she analysed, to commit her opinions to paper, correct the proofs, and find time to instruct her young brother and a sister—whom she tended as a parent—to mind the housekeeping business, and calculate the most trifling expense, since a large fortune had been lost, and it was necessary to provide for every want. Not the slightest reproach or complaint on her part ever gave her family to suppose that she was exhausted by the duties she had imposed upon herself. She refused many brilliant offers under the apprehension that by marrying she might deprive those who were so dear to her of the advantages they derived from her assiduous attentions. She never attended to her establishment in life until their own had been secured. She found with M. Guizot that happiness she was so deserving of, and which was of too brief enjoyment.

The Empress quoted another remarkable trait of filial piety exhibited by Mdlle. de Bethisy,<sup>1</sup> who, in order to save some remnants of the fortune of her emigrant parents, returned alone to France at the age of sixteen, became the nurse of her good old aunt Madame Dumoulin, the friend of Josephine, was incessant in her endeavours to procure a decree for raising the sequester, succeeded in recovering the pos-

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1 Countess de Grabowska.

session of some property, and transmitted to her father the produce of it, which he divided with his son the Count de Bethisy, who lately died Governor of the Tuileries. Madame Dumoulin was so much affected at the kind attentions of her niece, who declined every invitation in order to keep company with an aged woman in a state of constant bodily suffering, that she left her *the whole of her property* by will. Mdlle. de Bethisy instantly resigned to her father and her brother *two-thirds* of that inheritance. Such disinterested conduct does not convey an adequate idea of this lady, whose wit is the theme of general admiration, because it is not in her power to conceal it, whilst her uniform kindness of disposition can only be appreciated by those who know her. She never speaks of self nor of the good actions she performs any more than of the numerous sacrifices she submits to for the advantage of her family. She has been throughout her life unremitting in her endeavours to please her parents, who, it is said, were far from duly appreciating the extent of her exertions in their behalf. It is further reported that a marked preference for their son was the occasion of constant uneasiness to Madame de Grabowska. Such ingratitude appears to me so unnatural that I prefer disbelieving it, and hoping on the contrary that Madame de Grabowska has received from them the testimonies of attachment to which she had so just a claim. I am quite certain, at least, that she derives from her two sons all the happiness which it was her constant endeavour to procure to her own parents; their becoming conduct in the service, their mental accomplishments and talents, are a just reward for the care which their mother bestowed upon their education.

## CHAPTER XXXV

PRINCE KOURAKIN—HIS PORTRAIT—PRESENT MADE BY HIM TO THE CELEBRATED DUBOIS—M. DE CZERNICHEFF—SOME DETAILS RESPECTING HIM—THE PRINCES OF SAXE - COBOURG, MECKLENBURGH - SCHWERIN, AND WILLIAM OF PRUSSIA—MM. DE BASSANO, CADORE, CHAPTAL, AND PORTALIS

PERCEIVING that my mother and I began to find ourselves too long absent from my father, the Empress gave us one of her carriages to repair to Paris for a month; she made us promise to return to Navarre at the expiration of that month, and remain there with her until she should proceed to Malmaison, where she requested us to prolong our visit.

We availed ourselves of her kindness, and came to pass the month of February in Paris. We were received everywhere with a more marked attention than usual, and were invited to a very splendid ball. Having been on a visit for nearly two months with her majesty, we were constantly questioned respecting her with a warmth of feeling which clearly proved that all the good she had done, and especially that which she had endeavoured to do, was still fresh in everyone's recollection. I felt rather annoyed at being constantly obliged to *answer* when I wanted to *ask* questions. The winter had passed in a round of pleasures; several marriages had taken place

during my absence; and yet, instead of my being put in possession of the arrear of news, I had to inform others of what was going on at Navarre. We succeeded, in the course of eight days, in gratifying the curiosity of idlers; and I then freely indulged the gratification of observing in my turn, in order to entertain the Empress with a narrative of the changes that had occurred in society.

The female part of the community was chiefly engaged in discussing the fêtes given by Prince Kourakin, who was worthy of being a Frenchman by his gallantry and the good taste he displayed on those occasions. A splendid residence, the choicest furniture, a table served up with unexampled luxury, everything was brilliant about him with the exception of his person; being of a corpulent size and frightfully ugly, his countenance appeared the more forbidding as he was always dressed in a coat of cloth of gold, spangled with diamonds. I never saw him in a frock coat.<sup>1</sup> When he appeared in a saloon, where he was the only one dressed in this manner, he resembled an actor ready to strut upon the stage for the purpose of performing the part of a silly Turcaret. When the eye was once accustomed to his strange and disagreeable external appearance, he never failed to captivate by his truly playful wit and his accomplished address towards the fair sex, a quality we were not apt to discover in the high nobility of that period. He adopted at his own house the Russian custom which requires that the

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<sup>1</sup> It was said that he wore in the early part of the day, when at home, a dimity morning gown, to which were hung all his orders set in diamonds

master of the house should open the ball with the principal lady of the company. Prince Kourakin generally led the Duchess de Bassano *for the Polish dance*, a kind of march which opens every fête at St. Petersburg.

Prince Kourakin was dreadfully burnt at Prince Schwarzenberg's fête. He was trampled under foot, and the severe wounds which he received required during many months the assiduous attentions of our celebrated Dubois, whom he rewarded with his wonted generosity.<sup>1</sup>

The officers of his embassy were men of agreeable and very courteous manners; but they were all thrown into the shade by the fascinating Count de Czernicheff, whose appearance, which was far more singular than pleasing, had procured him a reputation for beauty very ill borne out by his truly Tartar countenance. A flat nose, Chinese eyes almost closed by constant winking, a large mouth, a sallow brown complexion, could never constitute a handsome face; but the remarkable elegance of his manners, a waist greatly tightened at the lower extremity, a handsome leg, very black hair, which had the appearance of curling naturally; his unrivalled address and finished education, a constant attention to the ladies, and above all, his character of a foreigner, had rendered him the admiration of everyone. He was thought to be exclusively intent upon pleasing, whilst his only object was to serve his sovereign, to whom he was greatly attached, by endeavouring to discover Napoleon's plans with the view of defeating them. Although he held no rank in the Embassy, he was

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<sup>1</sup> By the gift of a splendid snuff-box, containing a considerable sum in bank notes.

almost feared by Prince Kourakin. He was Alexander's favourite, and was often entrusted with verbal missions from both Emperors, a proof of the confidence which he inspired, notwithstanding his youth.

I have since heard him assert that he had obtained a much greater knowledge of the plans relative to the campaign of Russia in the midst of balls, than in the offices of the war department, and that whilst he was dancing not a word escaped him of the conversations carrying on in the different groups which happened to be near him. In a waltz he always took care to stop near a personage of note, who, supposing him wholly engaged in the enjoyment of dancing, allowed some words to escape which led him as a guide into the labyrinth from which it behoved him to extricate himself with unsullied honour, in order to justify the opinion which his Court entertained of him. He *feigned love* to none but the wives of ministers or of high functionaries, in order to derive some intelligence from any indiscreet expression on their part, which he skilfully promoted by flattering their vanity. I believe he was incapable of feeling any other love than that of ambition. He alleged that it was far better to pretend having inspired love to a handsome woman, although there were no truth in the assertion, than to have really excited such a passion without its being known. This affords a full measure of his sensibility of feeling.

He excelled in every gymnastic exercise, and was particularly remarked for his sure aim in firing a pistol, and his manner of dancing the *mazurk*, which was quite the rage during a whole winter.

M. de Czernicheff came to Paris for the first time in

1806; he was then only eighteen years of age, and had been dispatched as a courier to Napoleon. On the day of his arrival, he was brought by M. Demidoff to a magnificent ball given at the Saint-Joseph's Lodge, which rivalled that of Saint-Caroline. Chance having left a vacant place near my mother, he very unceremoniously took his seat, and opened the conversation with her in a very singular manner.

“Do you not know me, madam?”

“No, sir.”

“My name is Czernicheff; I arrived this morning from St. Petersburg; I performed the journey in fourteen days, and the most delightful part of my story is that I quitted that capital at the moment of retiring from a fête, and have arrived here just in time to dance at this party. This is very comical, but is very little connected with the object of my journey. Fancy to yourself, madam, that I was deeply in love at St. Petersburg; my Emperor was aware of it, though I did not suppose anyone was acquainted with my secret. On my return from the Marshal's ball, I found an order desiring me to attend immediately upon the Emperor. He asked me, the moment I entered his apartment, whether I was sufficiently devoted to his service to take my departure, in spite of my tender passion.

“‘Yes, sire.’

“‘Well then, my dear Czernicheff, make your preparations, you are going to Paris, you will see Napoleon, who will grant you an immediate audience; you will tell him the contents of the dispatches I now hand to you, you are to read them with attention previous to stepping into your carriage, and when you know their

contents by heart, you will destroy them. I have agreed with the Emperor of the French that you shall in future be our intermediate agent. I know your attachment to my person, your wit and discretion, consequently, your fortune is made. Adieu.'

"I returned home, obeyed the instructions of our Emperor, the men were putting the horses to the carriage, and whilst I was perusing those important papers, my valet was packing up my trunks. I took my departure, and travelled night and day. I have just arrived. I am to see Napoleon to-morrow, and am to return back immediately, with a verbal answer to my message. You must acknowledge, madam, that I am very quick in my movements."

"Yes," replied my mother, smiling at being unable to edge in a single word, "and especially at a reserve so creditable to a diplomatic agent."

"Oh, you may rest assured, madam, that I will never utter a syllable that may not be calculated to promote the interests of my master."

"I am fully persuaded of it; nevertheless, you are confiding your secret to one who is an utter stranger to you."

"I do so, because you appear to me so truly deserving of my confidence. Pray tell me who is that lively young girl now dancing before us."

"Mdlle. G——."

"She has eyes that would melt our Northern ice. And that handsome woman who is in conversation with M. Demidoff?"

"Madame de Graville."

"I greatly admire her, and must beg to be introduced."

Accordingly, he quitted my mother as abruptly as he had accosted her.

The next day he was admitted to the audience of Napoleon, who was so much pleased with his wit that he presented him with a splendid case of pistols, of the Imperial manufactory of Versailles.

This first journey of M. de Czernicheff conveyed the opinion that he was a downright giddy young man; great, however, was the surprise of everyone at again seeing him, at a later period, with altered manners and appearance. Some persons ascribe to him the fatal result of the campaign in Russia, for which the Emperor had laid down the most scientific plans; he was under the necessity of quickly changing them when he found that M. de Czernicheff had obtained possession of all his secrets. Hence arose all the calamities we since had to deplore. The Emperor Alexander loaded him with favours, and I believe he has retained all his appointments in the service of the Emperor Nicholas. His ambition must by this time be amply satisfied; but I doubt much whether he does not occasionally reproach himself with having so ill requited the highly flattering reception he met with in France.<sup>1</sup>

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1 M. de Rovigo states in his "Memoirs" that M. de Czernicheff was still in France when the discovery was made of his having obtained possession of important papers; that a telegraphic signal might have conveyed an order for his arrest, but that this precaution was omitted with a view to spare him from a disgraceful exposure. To the best of my recollection, a price was set upon his head, and he had two hours' start of the telegraph. It is highly improbable that a spirit of indulgence was carried so far as to allow of the escape of such a man, who had incurred a heavy guilt, especially when we reflect upon the just but rigid severity displayed towards his accomplice. I believe the plain truth to be that the

I was at this ball of the Saint Joseph's Lodge, where I saw a crowd of foreign princes, who courted the honour of a look from Napoleon; amongst the number were the Princes of Saxe-Cobourg, Mecklenburgh-Schwerin, and William of Prussia.

Prince Leopold was then very young, very handsome, and excessively bashful. He had no anticipation of the exalted fortune that awaited him at a later period; but he, perhaps, looked forward to happiness: he has lost it for ever! . . . . He was of a gentle disposition. As I met him almost every night at the house of a Russian lady of my acquaintance, I had an opportunity of judging of the simplicity of his manners; he exhibited no fascinating quality, nothing that could lead to suppose that he would one day become the chosen partner of the greatest princess in Europe. He seemed to possess the qualities of a private gentleman, rather than those of a man destined to rule over his fellow-creatures.

The dignity and pride of the family appeared to centre in his brother, the reigning prince; his handsome countenance displayed a cold, proud dignity, and indicated a habit of command; I preferred the soft expression of Prince Leopold's countenance.

They have exhibited a striking contrast to each other in their domestic life. The one made his wife so unhappy that he compelled her to sue for a separation; whilst the other still deplores the irreparable loss he has experienced.

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police was outwitted by M. de Czernicheff, and was behindhand in its measures or too late apprised of his departure. Thus much is certain, that I saw M. de Czernicheff in 1814, when he declared that it required the most extraordinary activity on his part to save him from his impending fate.

In their intercourse with society, all those petty highnesses were most affable and friendly, much more so than the greater part of the high court personages, who felt quite bewildered at finding themselves in such good company, and who, in order to conceal their embarrassment, affected with the Princes an air of familiarity nearly akin to impertinence. I must except from the number MM. de Bassano, de Cadore, Chaptal, and Portalis, who might be held up to imitation as models of wit and good address.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

RETURN TO NAVARRE — DEPARTURE FOR MALMAISON —  
PRESENT MADE BY HER MAJESTY OF CONTRABAND GOODS  
—DESCRIPTION OF THE PALACE OF MALMAISON—THE  
EMPEROR'S APARTMENT — DETAILS RESPECTING HIS  
PRIVATE STUDY.

ON my return to Paris I felt much astonished at seeing no longer around me that state of sumptuousness to which I had become accustomed. I am very ready to make this admission; at that time, however, as well as at present, I felt all the happiness of being *in my own home*, and experienced no regret when in the company of friends whom I preferred to the pomp and enjoyments of the Court of Navarre. Josephine was my principal attraction there; she it was whom I most regretted, and I looked forward with pleasure to the moment when I might be restored to her company.

We were punctual in returning to Navarre, agreeably to our promise; nothing remarkable occurred during the month of our further stay in Normandy.

At last preparations were made for returning to Malmaison; the Empress, being anxious to avoid receiving addresses from the towns through which she had to pass, apprised us that we should be the first to proceed in her carriage with some persons of her household, and that she should only take her departure

on the following day. We complied with her orders, and found all the municipal authorities in full costumes, with their scarfs and hats and feathers; the troops were under arms; the young girls, clad in white dresses, held nosegays in their hands; everything, in short, was prepared for her majesty's reception. Much disappointment was felt at her having passed by *incognito* on the preceding day (we were directed to make this assertion). We received in our carriage all the nosegays intended for her. Fortunately for us, as we could not convey to her the intended addresses, we were not called upon to hear them. We repaired to Paris in order to purchase a few articles of dress which we stood in need of, as our toilet must necessarily be more attended to at Malmaison than at Navarre, since her majesty admitted to her company every person belonging to the household of Napoleon and of Maria Louisa. We were to be absent eight days in making our preparations, and afterwards to return to meet the Empress.

I again felt alarmed at the mode of life we were going to lead, and was convinced I should often regret the delightful spot we were about to quit. I was very little acquainted with the high dignitaries who would now pass in review before me, and was well satisfied that as I held no situation in Josephine's household I should be closely eyed by every lady who might come on a visit to Malmaison.

I was always at a loss to understand how anyone could feel a pleasure in being looked at by indifferent people, who are always ready to lay hold of the faults and ridicules of others. Excessive vanity alone can afford courage to withstand such a scrutiny. There

was no possibility of escaping this inquisitorial search, and by way of consolation I bethought myself of doing the same. Accordingly I prepared to act the part of a person watched and watching in return; and in order that the former part might not be too painful to my feelings, I exhausted my humble stock of pin-money in purchasing the most becoming ornaments.

We returned to the Empress on the appointed day, and I felt greatly annoyed at having so hastily expended all the money I had laid by, as we were no sooner installed in the apartment reserved for us, when two footmen entered with muslins and other articles of dress sent to us by the Empress. We went immediately to give her thanks, to which she replied by saying that she could not do less in return for the unpleasantness we had experienced in staying a whole winter in the country, and that she would, moreover, be much pleased at my wearing dresses she could not apply to her own use, since they were *contraband goods*, which she would, however, be very sorry to consign to the flames. Many of them, in fact, were articles of Indian manufacture. This marked attention on the part of her majesty is a proof of her anxiety to be of service to those whom she honoured with her friendship, and to promote their enjoyments.

The Palace of Malmaison was built on a small scale; everything was sacrificed to the ground floor, which, without being very magnificent, is nevertheless well adapted for a prince. Napoleon had occupied a commodious apartment on that floor, and it had besides many other rooms well adapted for splendid parties—the hall, the billiard-table, the saloon, the dining-room, were delightful, and

the gallery presented one of the finest sights imaginable when lined with superb paintings and the admirable statues of Canova.

The Empress, who retained for the Emperor an attachment bordering upon adoration, would never allow even a chair to be removed from its place, and preferred occupying an indifferent apartment above stairs. Everything in the Emperor's cabinet remained in the same state in which he had left it; a book of history was lying on his bureau with the page marked at which he had left off; the pen with which he had been writing retained the ink which, a moment later, might have dictated laws to Europe; a map upon which he had been pointing out to his confidants his projects respecting those countries he meditated to invade, and which bore marks of his impatience, perhaps occasioned by some silly comment. Josephine had taken upon herself the exclusive care of shaking off the dust that covered what she called "his relics," and she seldom permitted anyone to enter this sanctuary.

Napoleon's Roman bed was without curtains; his arms were hung on the walls, and various parts of male dress were scattered over the furniture. It seemed as if he were just about to re-enter a place from which he had banished himself for ever,

The ground floor was very splendid, and contained numerous mosaic pictures from Florence; dials set in lapis lazuli and agate; bronzes of costly workmanship, and Sèvres porcelain vases, the gifts of the Emperor. The hangings of the saloon were the work of the Empress; the ground was of white silk, and the double J entwined with pompon roses; when there was little com-

pany they were covered with draperies of grey silk. Josephine's apartment was extremely simple, and hung with white muslin. It is true that the golden toilet presented by the City distinctly indicated to whom the apartment belonged. Nothing could equal the splendour of this piece of furniture; it formed there a perfect contrast with every other object. Her majesty often expressed the desire of sending it to the vice-queen, but Prince Eugene in my presence refused his consent. It was a personal offering which she had received at the period of the coronation. When the divorce took place Napoleon sent it to her as well as a gold breakfast service, and many other articles of great value which she had neglected to take away.

The menagerie was by no means extensive at this period of time; it would have required a considerable sum of money to keep it up, which her majesty preferred economising for other purposes.

Great stress has been laid upon her extravagant disposition, which she was always said to gratify regardless whether she could do so without running in debt. This may have been the case at the Tuileries, where she was surrounded by servile flatterers, and had no friend who would venture to give her an advice, or even to make the slightest observation to her. It is possible that at that time she may have freely indulged in her taste for everything that was splendid, grand and expensive; she was the reigning Empress; and that, which under any other circumstances would have been a useless and culpable prodigality, was excusable in a sovereign in whom it was the more incumbent to encourage the fine arts, as France had for a long time been deprived of their fascinating enjoyment.

The artists, persecuted in common with the nobility and the wealthy, had thought only of their personal safety; and far from seeking to make a display of their talents (of which they would have been very justly proud at an earlier period, and which at a late one were to contribute towards restoring to our beautiful native land its superiority over every other nation), they hid themselves from view, and were content to study in the solitude of retirement. In order to give them, depressed as they had been by misfortunes, that energy and elevation of mind so indispensable to the production of master-pieces, it was necessary not only to pay liberally for their works, but to surround them with all the marks of respect due to merit; this was what Josephine did. Proud of her approbation, Gros, Girodet, Godin, again took up their pencils; Spontini, Méhul, Paër, Boieldieu, their lyres; and Fontanes, Arnault, Andrieu and Lemercier their pens.

When she descended from the throne, she entirely changed her conduct; confiding in the tender affection of various persons who had preferred following her to her retreat rather than remain in the centre of favours and patronage, she listened to their counsels. I have often seen her abandon plans which she had cherished for months, solely on the representation of the heavy expense which would have attended them. Thus she deprived herself of the palace which was to have been built for her at Navarre, the one already existing being much too small. The Emperor had promised to defray half the expense of it; but as M. Berthaud's estimate amounted to *three millions of francs*, she would no longer allow the subject to be mentioned, and resigned herself

to put up with the very indifferent accommodation of the old palace. Passionately fond of flowers, she was desirous of having green-houses, which might at all times furnish her with rare and handsome ones; and that she might not diminish the sums devoted to charity or to the purchase of presents for her intimate friends, the menagerie was suppressed; and, with the exception of the kangaroos and a few parrots, all the animals were given away.

The park of Malmaison was beautiful, and kept in the greatest order, but it was found impossible to procure a supply of clear water because it was always brought to the spot by artificial means, and kept in a clayey soil. Foreign trees, flowers in every direction, and beautiful green plots, rendered it a charming residence. The Empress had caused a handsome sheepfold to be built near the pond adjoining the Bois de Butard<sup>1</sup>; and intended to procure some Swiss cows and place them under the care of a family from the neighbourhood of Berne, who were to have found in this place the calm and tranquillity to which they had been utter strangers in their native land. Having too confused a recollection of their story to present a narrative of it, I can only venture to state what has come under my personal knowledge, or what I have ascertained in a positive manner. Thus much I can say that such an episode would have afforded a fresh proof of her majesty's goodness of heart; and I regret the more not having paid sufficient attention to it, as it deprives me of the satisfaction of presenting it in all its details.

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<sup>1</sup> Saint Cucuphar's Pond.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### PLAN OF OUR DAILY OCCUPATIONS AT MALMAISON

ON the very first day of my arrival at Malmaison, I had occasion to regret our having quitted Navarre. It was necessary to be dressed and decked out at nine o'clock in the morning, in order to be at an early hour in the saloon, where all the senators, the councillors of state, and the persons belonging to the household of the Emperor, of the Empress Maria Louisa, and of the Princesses, evinced the greatest eagerness to pay their court. As they came in full toilet, we were under the necessity of receiving them in the same manner. The men were also in uniform, with the costume of their office; those who were attached to Josephine had resumed the dresses of chamberlain, equerry, &c. This Court etiquette was more particularly irksome to me, as I had never yet been subjected to its unpleasant duties.

We were seated in a circle, and kept up a conversation with our neighbours without being allowed to attend to any occupation. If one had for a neighbour a witty and obliging woman, the conversation did not flag; if, as was oftener the case, one happened to be placed near a lady full of conceit with her title, her diamonds, and her recently-acquired fortune, it was impossible to bear with her. I often returned to my apartment, in order to

indulge in some occupation; but a footman generally came for me a quarter of an hour afterwards, by desire of her majesty, who had at heart that we should remain with her, in order that her Court might appear the more numerously attended.

Breakfast was served up in the same manner as at Navarre. Ten or twelve visitors were usually invited beforehand, or engaged to remain after the visit, which they had purposely paid at an early hour in the morning. On rising from table, the company returned to the saloon; the Empress entered into conversation with them for about an hour, whilst walking to and fro in the gallery. It was the practice to stop at every picture, the merits of which had been canvassed on the preceding and on every other former day, to listen to observations already known by heart, and to the opinions of new comers, whether right or wrong, the critics being often ignorant of the historical features portrayed by our great painters. The next place of resort was the billiard-room, where very little interest was felt in the parties, as the games were of course won beforehand by the most distinguished members of the society; the result of the game having been foreseen, it afforded no pleasure to the company in the gallery, who might make a sure bet by ascertaining the rank of the person who played the game.

Crowds of people came in regular succession to pay visits, and the Empress always found obliging and graceful expressions for every one, which afforded a manifest proof that her majesty was still alive to the interests of each. When the weather was fine, the green-houses were inspected; the same walk was taken every day;

on the way to that spot the same subjects were talked over; the conversation generally turned upon botany, upon her majesty's taste for that *interesting* science, her wonderful memory, which enabled her to name every plant; in short, the same phrases were generally repeated over and over again and at the same time, circumstances well calculated to render those promenades exceedingly tedious and fatiguing. I no sooner stepped into that delightful walk, which I had so much admired when I first saw it, than I was seized with an immoderate fit of yawning, and could scarcely check myself in order to reply to questions put to me, and to keep up a conversation grown fastidious by its sameness. After examining some stamina of the choicest flowers, we went to admire the black swans, though they were infinitely less handsome than the white ones; the latter, however, have the misfortune of being more common. It was agreed on all hands that those birds, whose plumage resembles that of the turkey-cock, were beautiful; the chamberlain on duty would then give us on the spot a dissertation respecting the difficulty of naturalizing them; he gravely asserted that they could not exist anywhere but at Malmaison.

After we had returned home, the company who had arrived in the morning received a warning to take leave by the approach of her majesty's calashes, which indicated her intention to take a ride. She seldom kept the ladies to accompany her; at Malmaison as well as at Navarre, she named those of her household who were to be of her suite. We stepped into the other carriages, traversed the parks, and surveyed for a couple of hours the *Bois de Butard*; we never took any other

road. We then returned to dress in a more elegant costume for dinner, to which meal twelve or fifteen persons were always invited. On rising from table, the Empress sat down to cards; the remainder of the society had music in the gallery or played at billiards. Visitors regularly flocked in from Paris; tea, ices and cakes, were served up at eleven o'clock; her majesty retired at midnight, and we all withdrew to our respective apartments. The next and every other day resembled the preceding one, unless any extraordinary event should occur.

Nothing could be more gloomy than this kind of *amphibious* existence, if I may be permitted the expression. We had not sufficient etiquette for a Court, and were far too much constrained and affected for indulging in social enjoyment. We all kept watch upon each other; the slightest intimacy was quite out of the question; being always in a state of ceremonious intercourse, we found not a moment's leisure to converse with those for whom we might feel a partiality; and instead of that delightful custom we observed at Navarre of reading aloud and conversing without restraint, we had to put up, day after day, with the common-place conversations so much in vogue in the world, which leave no other feeling behind than a deep regret at having wasted one's time in listening to or joining in them.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

MEMOIRS OF M. DE BEAUSSET—CARDINAL MAURY—SAYING OF THAT PRELATE — HIS GORMANDIZING APPETITE — MDLLES. DELIEU—THEIR CHARACTER—CRESCENTINI—MADAME RILLIET-HUBERT—MILITARY SCHOOL OF SAINT GERMAIN—PRESENTS MADE BY THE EMPRESS TO M. DE TURPIN—CATACOMBS OF PARIS—M. DE TURPIN—M. DE THURY—M. EMANUEL DUPATY

M. DE BEAUSSET dwells at great length in his "Memoirs" upon the sincere affection he bore to the Empress, and upon her regard for him in return. I cannot say what degree of veracity is due to his assertions, for I have not, like him, made holes in doors for the purpose of seeing and hearing what was taking place within; thus much, however, is *certain*, that during a period of six weeks I never saw him *more than once* at Malmaison with his wife—a tall woman, nearly as large as he was corpulent. In order, no doubt, that this couple might harmonize together in everything, the lady wore a velvet dress of the same colour as the scarlet coat of her husband; this is the only circumstance that has brought to my recollection the fact of a visit which had nothing remarkable in it, for a prefect of the palace did not hold so important an office as to fix the attention of a person accustomed, as I then was, to meet generals, marshals, dukes, princes, and sovereigns at the Palace of Malmaison.

M. de Beausset was coldly received by Josephine, who probably found that he had been rather slow in paying his visit (we had already been three weeks at Malmaison). He had the awkwardness to say in the course of conversation that the Emperor asked him if he had been to pay his respects.

"I am probably indebted to that question," said the Empress with great reserve, "for the advantage of seeing you."

She neither invited him to dinner nor to breakfast for any of the succeeding days, as she was wont to do when anyone came to visit her. He was, perhaps, more fortunate after my departure, and he may have succeeded in recovering the good graces of the Empress, which it must have been so painful for him to have lost.

Cardinal Maury was one of the most assiduous of her visitors. I felt a great desire to become acquainted with a man who had acquired so much celebrity especially for his energetic conduct at a time when it was dangerous to manifest the opinions he entertained. I fancied that his countenance could not fail to be impressive, and his conversation to possess great attraction. I was again disappointed for the hundredth time in the course of my life, and saw in him nothing more than a corpulent man devoid of dignity, and completely spoiled by the weight of a reputation upon which he had, nevertheless, to a certain extent made considerable inroads.

He generally paid very little attention to what was passing around him, and conversed with the Empress, at such times as she spoke to him, upon insignificant trifles; he no longer presented the slightest indication of that Abbé Maury who replied, with so much com-

posure to those who were clamorous for his being hung up to the lamp-post,—

*“When you shall have hung me, do you expect to see the better for it?”*

Wrapped up in projects of ambition, which the cardinal's cap was inadequate to gratify, he only revived from the kind of reverie in which he was plunged to devour (the expression is correct) a quantity of small cakes, and to swallow several glasses of punch and ices. Her majesty laughed at his immoderate and unseemly voracity. When it was known that he was to come at night the servants prepared a double collation. My curiosity respecting the Cardinal was never gratified by any further details. It is far more advantageous for us not to come too much into contact with the objects of our admiration; by becoming better acquainted with them we incur the risk that the enthusiasm inspired by a noble action should make way for a feeling of painful regret, by our acquiring the melancholy certainty that a splendid reputation conferred upon true merit is nevertheless seldom unalloyed.

The Empress summoned to Malmaison two young ladies who had inspired a deep interest in their fate by their undeserved misfortunes and their wonderful talent for music. Mdlles. Delieu, the daughters of a banker who had failed (at Rouen, to the best of my recollection), found in the kind attentions of Josephine an affecting consolation for their bitter sorrows. Having been informed of the truly painful position of this family, which she had met on her way through Normandy, she took upon herself the education of the eldest sister, and of the second also at a later period. They were provided

with the best masters, and so far profited by the instructions given to them as to prove their gratitude to their august benefactress by their amiable conduct in after life.

It is impossible to hear a sweeter or a more chaste and powerful voice than that of Mdlle. Annette; a perfect method combined with that natural gift rendered her one of the most fascinating singers in Paris.<sup>1</sup> The second sister had not so fine a voice, but as it was an excellent contralto she ably seconded her sister in a duet which they sung with great effect. Those ladies were both living in the palace. They did not dine with her majesty, but were attended in their own apartment, and only came down when they were summoned to perform. On their first arrival they were so mild, so unassuming, and so deeply afflicted, that I took a great liking to them, the more so as the other ladies treated them with an *air of protection* which I conceived to be humiliating to their feelings. My mother and I were the only persons who bestowed any attention to them in the intervals between the songs; we had no great merit in so doing; but they ought, perhaps, to have evinced a just sense of our having treated them with more attention than the rest of the company. They did so at first; but having been subsequently treated with more con-

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<sup>1</sup> Crescentini assisted her with his advice. This celebrated man always displayed the utmost readiness to oblige a fellow-creature. His numerous friends found every amiable quality combined in his character. He never availed himself of his influence with the Emperor except in their behalf, and often obtained favours which would have been denied to everyone else. In a word, his splendid talent was not the only thing in him that excited admiration.

sideration, invited to take tea with her majesty, and honoured with presents from the viceroy, they assumed by degrees an air of reserve towards us, it being out of our power to do more than shew them civility, and were lavish in their attentions to the ladies attached to her majesty, from whom they had scarcely received a friendly look on their first arrival. Our early intimacy dropped, and towards the close of our visit at Malmaison we never spoke together except upon subjects connected with music. They were always treated very differently from Mdlle. de Castellane and myself. We frequently received from the viceroy and his mother presents of no intrinsic value, whilst valuable jewels and diamonds were given to those ladies. This was paying the price of their talents.

Being deprived of every resource at the death of Josephine they repaired to England, where they obtained great success by giving concerts in private saloons lent to them by distinguished ladies who called themselves *their patronesses*; this is tantamount to an engagement to exert every means for promoting the success of the persons thus patronized. It is said that Mdlles. Delieu amassed a considerable sum of money. They returned to France, and were very advantageously married. They were worthy of the fortune which they acquired, by the attention they bestowed upon the family to whom they devoted the fruits of their exertions. Their goodness of heart was duly appreciated by their mother and other sisters. Their trifling wrongs towards us ought not to prevent me from doing justice to their praiseworthy conduct towards every individual of their family.

During her stay at Geneva the Empress had often

met Madame Rilliet-Hubert, whose name I have already had occasion to mention. Aware of her deep concern at the departure of one of her sons, who insisted upon adopting the military profession (the only one for which he was calculated), her majesty promised to recommend him in the strongest manner to the general officer commanding the military school of cavalry established at Saint-Germain. As soon as she arrived at Malmaison she requested we would call upon M. Rilliet and enquire how he enjoyed himself at the military school. Being intimately acquainted with his worthy mother we felt great pleasure in having an opportunity of rendering her a service, and proving our gratitude for the friendly reception she had given to us at Geneva. We repaired to Saint-Germain in one of her majesty's carriages, a mode of travelling which removed every difficulty in the way of admission. It was the custom to search every person entering the precincts of the school, in order to prevent the pupils from receiving anything from out of doors. As we came on the part of Josephine, whose name was respected and cherished everywhere, we were excused from that unpleasant ceremony, very fortunately for M. Alfred Rilliet, to whom we brought some provisions which were sent to him by the Empress. His warlike ardour was still unchanged ; but he would have preferred being a common soldier rather than a pupil at this school in which the accommodations were of the very worst kind : the palace, having long remained uninhabited, was so damp that water fell from the blankets whenever they were wrung ; the food was wretched, and the ammunition bread worse in quality than what was provided for the army. We promised to give Josephine an account of

everything, and left him indulging the hope that her majesty's goodness would find some means of softening the hardships of this painful novitiate of glory. M. Rilliet would have found some consolation in being allowed to stand fire and to run into danger ; but fighting was going on without him ; this was his greatest mortification.

We mentioned to her majesty the bad accommodations of the school ; she immediately wrote to the general to request he would grant M. Rilliet one day's leave of absence every week.

"I cannot procure any alteration in his diet," she said to us ; "he must learn to eat tough meat before he can have the happiness of exposing himself to the loss of a limb ; but at all events he shall eat to his heart's content twelve hours in every week ; this will give him a stock of patience."

He accordingly came regularly to Malmaison. The heads of the establishment, perceiving the uniform interest shewn to him by the Empress, mitigated to a certain extent his insipid mode of existence ; for example, they occasionally invited him to dine with them. He proved himself worthy of the protection of the best of women by his uniform good conduct in the service.

M. de Turpin usually paid his visits to Malmaison in an ugly, weather-beaten cabriolet ; the Empress was informed of it, and without intimating to him her intentions she ordered a handsome one to be purchased, as well as a very fine horse. One morning, as he was directing his servant to get his modest equipage in readiness for returning to Paris, he saw the cabriolet approaching which her majesty had intended for him. He could not be mistaken as to its owner, since his arms

were painted on the panels, and were stamped in brass upon the harness. Josephine was not satisfied with giving what was most likely to be of service ; she, moreover, accompanied her presents with those graceful expressions which were so characteristic of her benevolent disposition.

She ordered from M. de Turpin a picture representing a Swiss view, of which he had made the sketch in her presence. This splendid landscape was brought to the Empress who was delighted with it. After pointing it out to the admiration of every visitor, she came up to the painter, and leading him to a window,—

“This is for you,” she said, placing bank-notes in his hands to the amount agreed on between them ; “and this is for your excellent mother. But if I have been mistaken in her taste, do not fail to tell her that I shall not be offended at her changing this trifling pledge of my friendship for whatever may be more acceptable to her. She will discover in it my anxiety to prove to her the sincere gratification which the painting of her son has afforded me.” The present she was thus offering was a diamond of the value of 6,000 francs.

Nothing can be more noble than this manner of making a present to a man who had no other resource than what he derived from his talent and from his office of chamberlain, a much more honourable than a lucrative one. Such a mode of rewarding cannot fail to secure an affectionate and devoted attachment, which money alone is not calculated to create.

I repaired one day to Paris for the purpose of visiting the Catacombs. The party had been arranged with several ladies of my acquaintance, and I imagined

that such an underground journey would impart to me the sensations felt on reading the description of the Catacombs of Rome by Delille or M. de Châteaubriand. My ideas had been for a week wrapped up in anticipations of the sight I was about to witness. When I reached, with my companions, that abode of death, which my imagination had pictured to me as solemn and religious in its aspect, I was quite surprised at not experiencing any throb nor any other sensation than astonishment at such absence of all emotions. The regularity of those walls of human bones, arranged with such symmetry, and lighted by our lanterns, appeared to my mind as a contradiction to nature. I saw nothing more in it than a melodramatic decoration—a kind of phantasmagoria. It was no doubt highly laudable to collect those remains which had been so dreadfully profaned, but the arrangement seems to be a complete failure. A sight of the Catacombs creates no emotion; those pillars of Death's heads are revolting to the eye and nothing more. In a word disgust is the only sensation felt on visiting this place. Would not M. de Thury have acted far more judiciously if he had enclosed in plain and noble monuments the mortal remains which he succeeded in wresting from the brutal fury of the Revolution? Affecting inscriptions derived from our poets, religious proverbs, and fragments of Psalms, would have been suitable to the occasion. I think they ought to have been translated into French, as better adapted to the comprehension of all classes, and of both sexes. Death indiscriminately assails the most powerful men and the weakest women, the learned and the ignorant. Should not an endeavour have been made to place within the

reach of every understanding those sentiments which are calculated to mitigate its horror?

My attention in the Catacombs was most attracted by the fort of Port-Mahon, sculptured by a disabled soldier, who obtained permission to remain in the vaults as a commutation for a severer punishment, and whose only instrument was his knife; he was thus engaged during a period of twenty-two years in representing the spot which had witnessed one of his gallant achievements. Thus it happened that this unfortunate man, who had been disgraced by an ignominious sentence, and, as it were, buried alive, still retained the recollection of his glory, and had no comfort in his dreadful position except what he derived from bestowing his undivided attention to the above work. That shapeless work is said to be of the greatest accuracy in its details.

We had in our company M. Emanuel Dupaty, who always exhibits a playful wit; he remained unchanged notwithstanding the distressing objects by which we were surrounded, and spontaneously composed the following verses with inconceivable rapidity. I carefully copied them, and am delighted at having it in my power to afford the public a fresh proof of the ease and elegance of one of our most fascinating poets:

A peine aux portes de la vie,  
Pourquoi descendez-vous au séjour de la mort ?  
La route des plaisirs, que vous offre le sort,  
Au printemps de vos jours, doit seule être suivie !  
Du flambeau sépulchral, les lugubres reflets,  
Ne répandent sur vous qu'une faible lumière ;  
Vos charmes sont perdus au séjour funéraire ;  
Et les morts n'ont point d'yeux pour contempler vos traits !  
Ils ne pourront louer ce qu'en vous on admire :  
On devient insensible aussitôt le trépas ;

La beauté sur les morts a perdu son empire,  
Et quand vous paraîtrez, leurs cœurs ne battront pas !  
Si la mort peut offrir par ses métamorphoses,  
Une leçon utile, attendez quelque temps :  
Vos pieds sont encore faits pour marcher sur des roses,  
Et non pour se heurter sur de froids ossemens.  
Croyez-moi, remontez pour toujours sur la terre ;  
Et s'il faut renoncer à la clarté du jour,  
Ne perdez jamais la lumière,  
Qu'en mettant sur vos yeux le bandeau de l'amour.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

RETURN TO MALMAISON—VISIT FROM THE EMPEROR—  
RECEPTION GIVEN TO HIM BY THE EMPRESS—THE  
GRAND DUKE OF WURTZBURG—HIS TASTE FOR SINGING  
—WAGER LAID WITH THE VICEROY—A RIDE TO LONG-  
CHAMPS—THE VICEROY MEETS WITH AN ACCIDENT—  
M. DE CAZES—THE KING OF NAPLES

ON my return to Malmaison, I was greatly disappointed at finding that the Emperor had been there in the morning. The whole palace was set in motion by such an unexpected visit, which afforded to Josephine the highest satisfaction. From a sense of delicacy well worthy of her, she received his majesty in the garden. They sat down on a circular bench placed before the window of the saloon, though at a sufficient distance to prevent anyone from overhearing a single word of their conversation, which must have been highly interesting. The ladies were concealed behind the window curtains, and endeavoured to guess by Josephine's expressive countenance, and by Napoleon's gestures, what was the subject which engaged their attention. Two hours elapsed in this manner; at last the Emperor took the Empress's hand, kissed it, and stepped into his calash which stood waiting in front of the park gate. Josephine accompanied him; and it was easy to perceive from her

contented looks during the remainder of the day, that she was well pleased with the purport of his conversation. She repeated several times that she had never known the Emperor more amiable than on this occasion; and that she experienced a bitter regret at being deprived of the power of doing anything for that *favoured mortal* (such was her expression). A few months later, the epithet no longer applied to Napoleon! . . . . fortune had betrayed him: nothing was left to him but his glory! . . . .

The Empress announced to us the approaching arrival of the Grand Duke of Wurtzburg, uncle to Maria Louisa.

"He is an excellent musician, mademoiselle," said Josephine, addressing herself to me, "you must sing with him."

"Do you think it possible, madam," observed the viceroy, "that mademoiselle can go through a piece of music with him, knowing as you do how apt she is to laugh? I doubt it."

"I laugh, monseigneur, in going through a piece of music with the Emperor of Austria's brother! Your imperial highness cannot think it possible that I should be so far wanting in respect to his rank."

"I am certain you will laugh."

"Indeed, I am quite sure of the contrary."

"Well then, mademoiselle; let us bet a *breloque*."<sup>1</sup>

"Agreed, monseigneur; all the better for my collection."

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<sup>1</sup> A jewel much in fashion at Malmaison. The Empress and the viceroy frequently made presents of very handsome ones. I had a collection of them which I greatly prized; it was stolen from me, together with many other presents for which I was indebted to her majesty's kindness.

“Patience; we shall see.”

Two days afterwards the whole palace was decorated with flowers; the covering of the furniture was removed; the garden walks were swept, &c., in expectation of the Grand Duke's visit; he was to spend the whole day with her majesty, who, being well aware of his partiality for Italian singing, had given orders for a few actors to be sent to her in the evening from the Opera Buffa of Paris.

We had paid particular attention to our toilets, and were all in the saloon an hour before the time, in order to receive his imperial highness, who had promised to arrive at ten o'clock in the morning; he was punctual to the hour, and made his appearance in a white uniform turned up with red, the Austrian full Court dress. We beheld a tall thin man, of a pale and grave countenance, who moved like an automaton; that dry, ugly, and disagreeable countenance appeared to me so unlikely to set my risible propensities in motion that I rejoiced beforehand at having won my wager.

The day passed off in walks to the green-house, and in drives in a calash; the Grand Duke always remained near the Empress, replied by monosyllables, and exhibited nothing in his manners that ridicule could lay hold of. He sat in an arm-chair at breakfast and dinner, on her majesty's right hand; ate and drank freely, and spoke little; I continued under the impression that there was nothing comical in his highness, and that I should have no difficulty in preventing myself from laughing. This is a true picture of young people, who always doubt the correctness of what they are told, and form too high an estimate of their own strength. I paid

dearly for that confidence, in the control which I fancied I could exercise over myself.

At eight o'clock the Empress introduced the Grand Duke into the gallery, saying that as she knew he was very fond of music she had provided a small concert for his entertainment. "Madam is very kind; I am indeed *mad* after music," he replied, with the utmost composure; "it quite enraptures me." The complete German accent which I now heard for the first time, this being the only well-articulated phrase uttered by his highness, and the composure which formed so striking a contrast with his imperial highness's words, made me smile; nevertheless, as I always had my *breloque* in view, I was careful to keep my countenance.

The company took their seats in the gallery; the pianoforte was opened, and Porto sang with Tacchinardi a splendid duet in their usual style. Madame Gazani and I performed a piece of music from *Azioli*, and the Empress afterwards requested that the Grand Duke would condescend to name any other he might desire me to sing with him. He pointed out the *Pandolfetto* of Paësiello. It was quite familiar to me, and I was delighted with the choice, conceiving that I stood less in danger of failing in it than in any other with which I might be less acquainted. We were proceeding towards the pianoforte; and just as I was about to begin my solo, the Grand Duke stopped me, saying, with the most courteous politeness,—

"Pardon me, mademoiselle, you have been calculating upon singing the female part?"

"Undoubtedly, monseigneur."

"Oh! that is quite impossible, for it is the very one

I reserve for myself. Will you have the kindness to take the man's part?"

Feeling quite astonished at the proposal, I stammered a reply. The viceroy took upon himself to answer, and said that I was sufficiently versed in music to feel perfectly indifferent at the change; his mother expressed the same opinion, and I now found myself compelled, whether I would or not, to sing the counter-tenor.

My wounded self-love had put me so much out of humour that I felt certain of winning the wager; I would no doubt at this moment have preferred the contrary. The fatal duet began, but we had scarcely executed the first bar when my angry mood disappeared, and my laughing propensity gained upon me with alarming rapidity. Let the reader fancy to himself a shrill falsetto proceeding from the long body of the grand duke, eyes constantly raised to heaven, enticing and coquettish looks darting from a naturally unmeaning face, a strongly-marked sentimental expression, and above all, that German accent which gives to Italian all the harshness of the Hungarian language, and it will be easy to account for the sudden revolution thus operated in my temper. For the space of a minute I made successful efforts to check myself; but at the word *gracioso* his highness put on so ludicrous a countenance, that I felt I could no longer hold out, and precipitately quitting the pianoforte, feigned a violent bleeding of the nose, and ran to the billiard-room in order to give a free vent to my propensity to laugh.

The viceroy followed me in order to claim his debt, and said I had adopted the same course that another lady, whose name I do not recollect, had once before

resorted to. On a former visit of the grand duke, she had been thrown into a similar perplexity, and had extricated herself by pretending the like complaint.

After I had indulged in a hearty laugh, it became necessary that I should return to the gallery. At every step I moved towards it, I pictured to myself the countenance of his imperial highness, and was forced to delay my return. At last I made my appearance, and the Prince inquired after my health with the utmost marked politeness, adding—

“Her majesty has probably caused her gallery to be over-heated, for I have frequently witnessed the like accidents.”

His good nature would have made me repent the laugh at his expense, if it had depended upon me to check myself; but I really was unable to prove the viceroy wrong in his prediction.

The time for Longchamps was drawing near. Josephine asked Mdles. de Castellane, de Mackau, and myself, if we felt any desire to go there. With youthful sincerity we replied in the affirmative. She ordered M. de Monaco to give directions for the finest calash to be in readiness for that gay occasion, with a view to our going to Longchamps in a becoming style. She presented us with elegant white hats and feathers, and we started off in a carriage and four horses led à *la d'Aumont* by jockeys wearing the Emperor's livery. Two out-riders preceded our carriage, and two followed it. On reaching the Bois de Boulogne we attracted general notice, as much from the elegance of our equipage and dress, as from the curiosity created by the appearance of one of Josephine's carriages in public; it was descried at

a great distance by the enormous white silk umbrella, which rose from the centre of the calash, and served as a covering to it. Mdles. de Mackau and Castellane were very handsome, and Madame Gazani could not fail to attract notice; we were therefore greatly admired. I was delighted at our not being compelled to follow the line of carriages, and at our driving with great rapidity through the Bois de Boulogne, in the midst of the walk which was exclusively reserved for the princesses and the ambassadors. All the young horsemen followed us, probably in the expectation of seeing her majesty.

The viceroy, who was on horseback, rode up to speak to us; he kept with us for a long time, leaning with his hand upon the carriage, in order that we might hear his conversation. The Prince's saddle was probably loose, for we suddenly saw him fall to the ground. We were greatly alarmed; fortunately, however, he was not hurt, and was the first to laugh at the accident, which he said was not attended with any personal inconvenience to him, since at the moment of his fall there was none but paltry hackney coaches near us, and he could not possibly be acquainted with anyone in them. "Formerly," he added, "I should have deemed myself fortunate in receiving a bow from a person sufficiently favoured by fortune to be driven in such a vehicle, modest as it is, because I was too poor to hire one; this is a proof, ladies, that one should never despair of anything." Like Josephine, he always spoke of the days of his poverty with the utmost candour; he was thereby thought more entitled to the splendid fortune to which he had been raised.

We returned to Malmaison quite delighted with our

triumphal ride. Her majesty seemed pleased at the anxiety of the people to crowd round her carriage, in the hope of seeing her. "It thus appears that I am not altogether forgotten!" she said; "this is but just; for I love the French, and have done all in my power to prove it to them; had I possessed greater influence, I should have done still more!" In fact, she never omitted an opportunity of relieving the unfortunate, of pleading their cause, of obtaining the pardon of condemned criminals, of procuring situations for men of real merit.

One day, just as we were about to step into a landau, and take our usual ride to the Bois du Butard, a letter from the *Empress-mother* was handed to her majesty.

"Who was the bearer of this letter?"

"M. de Cazes, madam; he awaits your majesty's orders."

"I shall give them on my return."

M. de Cazes waited, accordingly, in the porter's hall. He was at this time the private secretary of the Empress-mother, a situation which did not entitle him to the privilege of entering her majesty's saloon; she spoke of him in the carriage, as I was told by my mother who accompanied her, adverted to his witty turn of mind, and said that he could not fail to attain the highest rank. He has proved the truth of this horoscope.

The King of Naples came one morning to Malmaison. The Empress had frequently been visited by every member of the Imperial family except himself; she therefore did not expect to see him.

"By what chance, sire?" were her first words to him.

"Madam, I was afraid of calling upon your majesty, through an apprehension that the Emperor might disapprove of my visit. I lamented the restraint I thus imposed upon myself, for you cannot entertain a doubt of my respectful attachment to your majesty." She made no reply. "Being at Saint-Cloud," he continued, "and as my carriage was in readiness to take me back to Paris, the Emperor saw it, and said that I was no doubt going to Malmaison. Delighted to take advantage of what I considered in the light of a permission, I immediately stepped into my carriage, and hastened to pay my respects to your majesty."

"Sire, I am truly grateful to the Emperor for his kindness, and I request you will do me the favour to tell him so."

Josephine instantly changed the conversation. She behaved towards the King of Naples with great coldness and circumspection.

After he had left Malmaison, the Empress told us that she was not partial to him. "He is too *servile* in his deportment towards the Emperor to be sincerely devoted to his person. Should he ever find an opportunity of betraying him, he will not let it escape." She lived long enough to witness the fulfilment of her sentiments in respect to him. Her mind was gifted with that quick perception which enabled her to form an immediate, and generally a correct, judgment respecting those whose characters she took any pains to study. She had, no doubt, to lament many acts of ingratitude towards her, because no sooner was any

person unfortunate than she laid aside all attempt to penetrate his disposition ; but she was never the dupe of false demonstrations of attachment, or of assumed good qualities. The persons who composed her society ever since her divorce afforded a proof of her discrimination *in selecting*, when she was at liberty to do so. With the exception of one or two individuals who were forced upon her, the most endearing qualities were to be found in those who were admitted into the intimacy of her domestic circle.

## CHAPTER XL

FEELINGS OF ENVY AMONGST THE LADIES ATTACHED TO  
THE EMPRESS — M. PIERLOT; HIS UNSUCCESSFUL  
SPECULATIONS—HARD-HEARTEDNESS OF M. DE MONACO  
— CONDUCT OF MADAME PIERLOT — M. LE ROI, THE  
MILLINER—M. DE MONTLIVAUT APPOINTED RECEIVER-  
GENERAL TO HER MAJESTY—JEWELS OF THE EMPRESS;  
AN OLD PAIR OF SHOES

My protracted residence at Malmaison only tended to heighten my dislike of the place. As the number of those who called to pay their court went on increasing, I was under the necessity of beholding new countenances every day, of submitting to their inquisitive looks, witnessing the most abject adulation, listening to silly and unconnected conversations, and enduring the stale compliments paid to my humble vocal talents, which I was reluctantly compelled to exhibit every evening at the palace. This never-ending etiquette was irksome beyond measure to me; and were it not for the pleasure of approaching the Empress, and of receiving repeated proofs of her affection, a pleasure which on each occasion was as vivid as if it had possessed the charm of novelty, I should have felt it impossible to submit to a mode of living which formed so absolute a contrast with all my habits and inclinations. I was, moreover, debarred of the assistance of those masters whose

instructions I was not yet competent to dispense with; and I very seldom saw my father, whose absence I deplored as the greatest of all losses; I was, therefore, extremely anxious to return to Paris. Whenever we mentioned the subject, Josephine opposed our wishes, and we consented to prolong our stay.

The enjoyment of so much favour with her majesty was beginning to indispose those ladies towards us, who in virtue of their station deemed themselves entitled to the exclusive possession of her good graces. They still kept up the outward appearances of kindness, owing, no doubt, to their not having as yet matured the plan by which they meditated to procure our removal; but they no sooner fancied themselves beyond the reach of being remarked than their countenances assumed an expression of anger which could not escape my penetration. I mentioned the circumstance to my mother, who replied that I was wrong in supposing there existed any altered feelings towards us; she discovered no change of conduct in our regard, and was satisfied that my uneasiness was as usual the offspring of my own fancy.

I was already haunted at that period with the presentiment that the deepest sorrows would disturb the progress of my existence. My parents had been so long familiar with misfortunes that I conceived myself born to a life of sufferings. The sacrifice of parting for ever from her majesty seemed to me a trial far beyond my strength; from that moment my imagination fancied its approach; I no longer felt unalloyed delight at her repeated marks of kindness, and often withdrew to my apartment to bewail with bitter tears that state of

apprehension which baffled my attempts to control it.

M. Pierlot experienced at this time a series of misfortunes which compelled him to suspend his payments, and to submit to an act of bankruptcy in which the Empress was found to be included for a considerable sum. Madame d'Arberg, who was inflexible in whatever concerned her majesty's interests, represented to her that she could not relinquish her claim, as it was her intention to do; M. Pierlot was her Receiver-General, and it was inexcusable in him to have risked her property as he had done. The observations of the lady of honour were re-echoed by M. de Monaco in a tone of extreme harshness; he went even further, and warned the Empress that Madame Pierlot, who was aware of her majesty's humane disposition, would no doubt come to intercede for her husband; but that she should refuse to see her.

"Nevertheless, sir, I am greatly attached to her; her irreproachable conduct as a wife and a mother plead strongly in her favour, and I am at a loss to conceive your motive for wishing me to act otherwise towards her than I am wont to do towards everyone else."

"Your majesty is no doubt perfectly free to act as you think proper; but a man who is unfaithful to his trust has no claim to pity; he deserves, on the contrary, a severe punishment, as an example to those who might otherwise be tempted to tread in his footsteps."

"Well, then, let no more be said about it," rejoined Josephine, in a tone of displeasure; "since a sovereign is not at liberty to follow her inclinations, I shall not see Madame Pierlot. She is indeed to be pitied!"

An order was accordingly given that she should not

be admitted. Having at all times met with a kind reception from the Empress, who frequently invited her to join her private circle, it was natural that in the unmerited misfortune that oppressed her she should reckon upon the benevolence of disposition which it was her intention to appeal to; but every door was closed against her. She displayed, however, a perseverance in perfect keeping with those other qualities which had secured for her the esteem of all; she repaired to M. Le Roi, the milliner, and succeeded so far in securing his good wishes that he consented to take her with him to Malmaison in the disguise of one of his female apprentices. On arriving at the palace, where she had so often met a welcome reception, she proceeded in search of Mdle. Avrillon, who, being at all times disposed to do an act of kindness, introduced her veiled into the apartment of the Empress, by which means her countenance was hidden from observation. She followed M. Le Roi with a bandbox in her hand, which she hastily laid aside, and threw herself at the feet of her majesty, who was deeply affected at seeing her reduced to the necessity of having recourse to such a stratagem in order to gain access to her presence. Madame Pierlot related the misfortunes of her husband with great warmth, in an eloquence of language which burst from her overflowing heart; she described the horrors of his situation, in the event of the Empress persisting in discarding him, and beseeched her to retain him in his situation.

“What you ask of me,” replied Josephine, with emotion, “is unfortunately impossible; I am no longer at liberty to keep him; he had powerful enemies in this place, they hastened to give information to the Emperor,

who has just had it intimated to me that M. de Montlivault was appointed to be my Receiver-General. I deeply regret the hurried manner in which this affair has been settled. Believe me, madam, when I assure you that I have had no hand in it. I had great confidence in M. Pierlot, feel much interested in the welfare of your children, and entertain a very sincere affection for you. I wish it had been in my power to prove my sincerity in a more effectual manner than mere words, but what would you have me do? *I am tied down*; I promise you, however, that I shall allow M. Pierlot whatever time he may require for reimbursing the deficiency in my private funds. Call upon me from time to time without having recourse to this disguise. I am thankful to Le Roi for suggesting it, and to the worthy Avrillon for not refusing you admittance; this is the way in which princes may be effectually served. I always feel beholden to those who place it in my power to avoid the very appearance of unfeelingness."

M. Pierlot was in fact replaced by M. Casimir de Montlivault, with whom I have only been slightly acquainted; I disliked his consequential air of protection; his tone of self-sufficiency excited my aversion, and no less so his evident delight at hearing himself talk; this was the more ridiculous, as he never uttered anything beyond common-place observations, owing to a constant apprehension of committing himself. This is certainly no more than the private opinion of a very young person, who expresses her sentiments at random; it may, perhaps, be quite at variance with the true character of that functionary, who is no doubt a man of great talent, since he succeeded at all times, and under various Govern-

ments, in holding distinguished employments. I abstain, therefore, from insisting upon the correctness of my opinion, I merely state my impressions.

It happened to us on one occasion to request the Empress to shew us her diamonds, which were locked up in a concealed cellar, the key of which was generally confided to Madame Gazani and M. Pierlot. She yielded with the most willing compliance to the wishes of such giddy girls as we were, ordered an immense table to be brought into the saloon, upon which several of her maids in waiting laid a countless number of caskets of every form and shape. They were spread upon that spacious table, which was absolutely covered with them. On the opening of the caskets we were perfectly dazzled with the brilliancy, the size, and the quantity of jewels composing the different sets. The most remarkable, after those which consisted of white diamonds, were in the shape of pears formed of pearls, perfectly regular and of the finest colour; opals, rubies, sapphires, and emeralds, were encircled with large diamonds, which were, nevertheless, considered as mere *mountings*, and never taken into account in the estimation made of those jewels; they formed altogether a collection which I believe to be unique in Europe, since they consisted of the most valuable objects of that description that could be found in the towns conquered by our armies. Napoleon was never under the necessity of seizing upon objects, which there was always evinced the utmost anxiety to offer to his wife; the garlands and bouquets formed of such a countless number of precious stones had the effect of verifying the truth of the descriptions hitherto so fanciful which are to be met with in the fairy tales. None but

those who have seen this splendid collection can form an adequate idea of it.

The Empress seldom wore any other than fancy jewels; the sight, therefore, of this *exhibition* of caskets excited the wonder of most of the beholders. Her majesty greatly enjoyed our silent admiration. After having permitted us to touch and examine everything at our leisure,—

“I had no other motive,” she kindly said to us, “in ordering my jewels to be opened before you than to spoil your fancy for such ornaments. After having seen such splendid sets you can never feel a wish for inferior ones, the less so when you reflect how unhappy I have been, although with so rare a collection at my command. During the first dawn of my extraordinary elevation I delighted in these trifles, many of which were presented to me in Italy. I grew by degrees so tired of them that I no longer wear any, except when I am in some respects compelled to do so by my new rank in the world! a thousand accidents may, besides, contribute to deprive me of those brilliant though useless objects. Do I not possess the pendants of Queen Marie Antoinette?<sup>1</sup> and yet am I quite sure of retaining them? Trust to me, ladies, and do not envy a splendour which does not constitute happiness. I shall not fail to surprise you when I relate that I felt more pleasure at receiving an

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<sup>1</sup> Josephine often spoke of the unhappy Marie Antoinette; and always with the respect so eminently due to misfortunes borne with such exalted courage! The pendants in question are pearls of a single diamond, without any mounting. To the best of my recollection, they have been redeemed by the Dauphiness. Their value was estimated at 300,000 francs.

old pair of shoes than at being presented with all the diamonds which are now spread before you."

We could not help smiling at this observation, persuaded as we were that Josephine was not in earnest ; but she repeated her assertions in so serious a manner that we felt the utmost curiosity to hear the story of this *wonderful pair of shoes*.

"I repeat it, ladies," said her majesty, "it is strictly true that the present which of all others has afforded me most pleasure is a pair of *old shoes of the coarsest leather* ; you will readily believe it when you shall have heard my story.

"I had set sail with Hortense from Martinique on board a ship in which we received such marked attentions that they are indelibly impressed on my memory. Being separated from my first husband, my pecuniary resources were not very flourishing ; the expense of my return to France, which the state of my affairs rendered necessary, had nearly drained me of everything, and I found great difficulty in making the purchases which were indispensably requisite for the voyage. Hortense, who was a smart, lively child, sang Negro songs and performed Negro dances with admirable accuracy ; she was the delight of the sailors, and in return for their fondness she had made them her favourite company. I no sooner fell asleep than she slipped upon deck and rehearsed her various little exercises to the renewed delight and admiration of all on board. An old mate was particularly fond of her, and whenever he found a moment's leisure from his daily occupations he devoted it to *his little friend*, who was also exceedingly attached to him. My daughter's shoes were soon worn out with her constant dancing and

skipping. Knowing as she did that I had no other pair for her, and fearing lest I should prevent her going upon deck if I should discover the plight of those she was fast wearing away, she concealed the trifling accident from my knowledge. I saw her once returning with bleeding feet, and asked her, in the utmost alarm, if she had hurt herself.

“‘No, mamma.’

“‘But your feet are bleeding.

“‘It is really nothing.’

“I insisted upon ascertaining what ailed her, and discovered that her shoes were all in tatters, and that her flesh was dreadfully torn by a nail.

“We had as yet only performed half the voyage; a long time would necessarily elapse before I could procure a fresh pair of shoes, and I was mortified at the bare anticipation of the distress my poor Hortense would now feel at being compelled to remain confined in my wretched little cabin, and of the injury her health might experience from the want of exercise. At the moment when I was wrapped up in sorrow and giving free vent to my tears, our friend the mate made his appearance, and enquired with his honest bluntness what was the cause of our *whimperings*. Hortense replied in a sobbing voice that she could no longer go upon deck because she had torn her shoes and I had no others to give her.

“‘Is that all? I have an old pair in my trunk; let me go for them. You, madam, will cut them up, and I shall sew them over again to the best of my power. Everything on board ship should be turned to account; this is not the place for being too nice or particular;

we have our most important wants gratified when we have the needful.'

"He did not wait for our reply, but went in quest of his old shoes, which he brought to us with an air of exultation, and offered them to Hortense, who received the gift with every demonstration of delight.

"We set to work with the greatest alacrity, and my daughter was enabled, towards the close of day, to enjoy the pleasure of again amusing the ship's company. I repeat that no present was ever received by me with more sincere gratitude. I greatly reproached myself for having neglected to make enquiries after the worthy seaman, who was only known on board by the name of James. I should have felt a sincere satisfaction in rendering him some service, since it was afterwards in my power to do so."

We felt much interest in this story, which was related with the most charming simplicity of manner, and created the liveliest emotions.

## CHAPTER XLI

PRINCESS D'ECKMUHL—SOME PARTICULARS RESPECTING  
HER MARRIAGE—HER BROTHER, GENERAL LECLERC—  
MADAME LECLERC (AFTERWARDS PRINCESS BORGHÈSE)  
—EXPRESSION OF MDLLE. DUCHESNOIS—M. JULES DE  
CANOUVILLE—BLUNDER OF M. BOUSQUET, THE DENTIST  
—MODERATION OF THE VICEROY—PRESENT MADE BY  
PRINCESS PAULINE TO M. DE CANOUVILLE—DEATH OF  
THE LATTER—PORTRAIT FOUND UPON HIS PERSON—  
M. ERNEST DE CANOUVILLE

I RENEWED acquaintance at Malmaison with a person with whom, previously to her marriage, I had been on terms of intimacy, the remembrance of which I had never ceased to cherish. This was Mdle. Aimée Leclerc, who had become Princess d'Eckmuhl. The elevated rank she had attained had not, it was said, operated the least change in her amiable disposition. She was no less remarkable for her exquisite beauty than for her gentle, modest, and unassuming deportment. These qualities, which endeared her to all in times when lowliness and poverty were her lot, still predominated in her when raised to that elevation in society which was considered by everyone as the reward bestowed by a just Providence upon her virtues.

The Empress was particularly attached to this lady, and treated her with every demonstration of sincere

esteem. As soon as she left the palace her majesty was lavish of encomiums upon her, which might have been deemed exaggerated were it not for Josephine's well-known frankness of character. She told us in what manner the marriage of Mdlle. Leclerc with Marshal Davoust had been brought about. These details are sufficiently remarkable to claim some notice in this place, and clearly indicate how the most unbending and untractable dispositions were forced to yield to the wishes of Napoleon, even at a time when he held only the consular sway.

At the period of the expedition to St. Domingo, Bonaparte determined to confide the command of the troops to his brother-in-law, General Leclerc, who had married Pauline Bonaparte. He summoned that officer to his closet, and declared to him his intentions.

"I should be happy to render fresh services to France, but I must inform you, General, that a sacred duty binds me to this country."

"Your affection for Paulette? She will follow you, and I approve of her doing so. The air of Paris does not agree with her; it is only calculated for coquettes. Such a character ill becomes her, and she must accompany you; this is well understood."

"I should no doubt be distressed at parting from her; but this reason would not be sufficient to prevent my assuming an honourable command. My wife would remain surrounded by a family which is greatly attached to her. I should not, therefore, entertain any uneasiness on her account. The concern I feel for the fate of my kind sister alone compels me to refuse an employment which under any other circumstances would be the

object of my dearest ambition. She is young and handsome, her education is not yet completed, I have no marriage portion to give her; how can I leave her unprotected when my absence may be immeasurably prolonged, when, perhaps, I may never return? My brothers are not here; it behoves me, therefore, to remain. I need only appeal to your own heart, knowing as I do your attachment to your family; I ask you, general, how can I possibly act otherwise?"

"Certainly you cannot; you should procure a match for her immediately . . . to-morrow, for instance, and then take your departure."

"I repeat that I have no fortune, and——"

"What of that? may you not command me? I desire you, my dear Leclerc, to make immediate preparations for departure; your sister shall be married to-morrow; I cannot yet say to whom, but that is of no consequence—she shall be married, and advantageously so."

"But——"

"Have I not spoken in plain language to you? Say no more, then, on the subject."

General Leclerc was accustomed, like every other general, to consider as his master the individual who had so recently been his equal, and withdrew without uttering any further reply.

General Davoust entered the First Consul's apartment a few moments afterwards, and said that he came to inform him of his intended marriage.

"With Mdlle. Leclerc? I find it a very suitable match."

"No, General, with Madame——"

"With Mdlle. Leclerc," rejoined Napoleon, laying particular stress upon the name. "I not only find it a very suitable match, but I *insist* upon it taking place immediately."

"I have long felt an attachment for Madame——; she is now at liberty to marry, and nothing shall induce me to renounce her."

"Nothing but my will," replied the First Consul, fixing his eagle eye upon him. "You must repair immediately to Madame Campan's establishment at Saint-Germain; on your arrival, you are to call for your intended bride to whom you will be presented by her brother, General Leclerc, who is now with my wife, and will accompany you. Mdlle. Aimée shall come to Paris this very night. You must bespeak the wedding gifts, which must be of the most costly description, since I am to act as the young lady's father on the occasion; I take upon myself to provide the marriage portion and the bridal dress, and the nuptials shall be celebrated as soon as the requisite legal formalities shall have been complied with; no unnecessary delay shall interfere. You have now been made acquainted with my wishes, *and have only to obey.*"

Napoleon had no sooner spoken these words, which he hurried over without the slightest pause, and in that tone of command so peculiar to him, than he rang the bell and ordered General Leclerc to be sent for.

"Well, was I wrong?" said the First Consul to him when he made his appearance. "Here is your sister's husband; proceed together to Saint-Germain, and let me not see either of you until everything shall have been arranged; I hate all discussions of pecuniary concerns."

Both generals were mute with astonishment, and

withdrew to *obey* the Consul's bidding. Notwithstanding the bluntness of his very unamiable disposition, General Davoust humbly submitted to his master's will. On arriving at Madame Campan's establishment he was presented to Mdlle. Leclerc, whom he found by no means to his liking, probably because she had been offered without his being allowed the option of refusing her. It will readily be believed that cheerfulness did not preside at the interview; nevertheless, every preliminary arrangement was at last agreed upon, and the nuptials took place a very few days afterwards.

General Davoust did not, in the first instance, appreciate the merits of his charming wife. It is said that she was subjected to most painful scenes, and to reproaches entirely groundless, since she was quite innocent of the constraint which had alone compelled her to submit to so severe a yoke: she abstained from complaining, and bore the wrongs inflicted upon her with uniform patience and mildness. She never appeared at the Court of the Tuileries, of which she was one of the principal ornaments, except when compelled to do so; she preferred the retirement of a private life where she was wholly wrapped up in the husband who embittered her existence, and in her children upon whom she doted; she has since had to lament the loss of many of them. This accumulation of cares never created any change in her amiable serenity of temper. Her exalted qualities had at last the effect of softening the disposition of a man who was no doubt possessed of splendid warlike talents, but had none of those which form the charm of a domestic life. He repented of his indifference towards a woman who was the admiration of everyone, and repaid her at

last by the sincerest affection and the most unbounded confidence.

I have had no intercourse with the Princess d'Eckmuhl for the last twenty years; what I have just related cannot, therefore, spring from any other motive than a desire of enhancing the merit of a lady whose modesty is only equalled by her merit; I have done no more than repeat what was told to us by the Empress, and I feel the sincerest pleasure in exhibiting to public admiration a lady who reflects so much credit upon our sex.

I have a perfect recollection of General Leclerc, with whom I resided for some time in the country during my earliest infancy. He was of short stature; his physiognomy was expressive of gentleness, and he justly enjoyed the reputation of being a kind and benevolent man. He doted upon his wife, and bore with the utmost composure the capriciousness of her violent and uneven temper. She tormented him upon every subject, and constantly told him that he was very fortunate in having married a person of her rank, and in having become the Consul's brother-in-law. This latter title, according to every appearance, was the very cause of the melancholy turn of his mind in a situation seemingly so brilliant for him. He was naturally of a very independent character, and would have preferred being indebted to his own merit for his advancement and his elevated rank. At the period of his marriage, the family of Bonaparte was the reverse of being affluent, and nothing had afforded any presage of the glory it has since attained. General Leclerc, who was passionately fond of Pauline, sought nothing more than the possession of her hand; no sordid calculation ever dictated his choice.

He came to take leave of one of my relatives on the occasion of his departure for St. Domingo. I recollect his replying in the following words to the compliments addressed to him respecting the results of his expedition :

“Madam,” said he, “they cannot be otherwise than unpleasant as respects myself; if I succeed it will be said that every movement on my part was enjoined to me by my brother-in-law; if I fall in the attempt my memory will not be spared from reproaches. The Consul’s flatterers will assert that there was no fault to be found with the plan of the campaign, and that my incapacity has alone occasioned the failure of the views which he meditated. I take my departure with a heavy heart; now, however, we must, one and all, *be prepared to yield implicit obedience; we have found a master in him to whom we looked up for a protector.*”

These expressions were canvassed at great lengths in my presence; and the impression which they made upon my memory was no doubt owing to the surfeit I felt at the subject having been discussed during a whole evening. Nothing can be more fatiguing than to be compelled to listen, at twelve years of age, to political discussions; I even felt more reluctance for such conversations at that time than I do at the present day. I was reared up under the exclusive care of an aunt of a superior turn of mind, who wished to break my attachment to the frivolous occupations which befitted my youthful years; she insisted upon my remaining in her saloon, a perfect magic lantern, in which the whole of Paris passed under review; and in order to satisfy herself that I had listened to the conversation, she invariably questioned me the next morning on every topic which

had been discussed on the preceding night. My aunt condescendingly explained to me what exceeded my comprehension ; she corrected my errors in judgment and impressed upon me the necessity of bestowing my thoughts upon subjects foreign from those of mere amusement, which too often leave the mind a prey to weariness and regret ; her injunctions, however, did not prevent my preferring a ball or a theatrical performance to those social conversations, in which I was condemned to remain silent without daring to stir from my seat.

The advices then bestowed upon me have perhaps tended to check my excessive giddiness of disposition ; but they had not the effect of wholly removing it. Throughout my existence I have unfortunately acted with little or no reflection, and have been led by first impulses ; I have, accordingly, often had to repent many an inconsiderate act ; nevertheless I acquired the habit of passing each night in review everything I had done or heard in the course of the day. To this circumstance I am no doubt indebted for the facility I have acquired of arranging my recollections, and for having it in my power, by noting them down, to enhance, if possible, the feelings of affection so generally entertained for the Empress Josephine. Thus far, therefore, the advices of my respectable aunt have not been wholly lost upon me ; I owe her this tribute of praise.

Madame Leclerc was unquestionably the prettiest woman I ever saw. Neither jealousy nor envy, which are so quick at discovering a fault in whatever claims general admiration, has ever succeeded in discovering the slightest blemish in that beautiful countenance, which was combined in the same person with the most elegant,

the most perfect shape, and the most captivating gracefulness of manners. It was quite impossible to criticise her outward appearance; all were forced to be silent or to join in the praises which her incomparable beauty never failed to call forth. Happily for women of grovelling minds who are envious of the admiration paid to others of their sex, they had an ample field for revenge in descanting upon the mental defects, the temper, and conduct of Madame Leclerc.

She possessed no advantage of education, and her conversation was as unmeaning and tedious as her countenance was fascinating. Unable to speak of anything else but her toilet, which formed the chief occupation of her existence, she could not bear the discussion of any other topic in her presence. The only way to win her esteem was to speak of ladies' hats, of dresses, &c.; if anyone had the misfortune to allude to music, painting, or history, she conceived an aversion for that person, because her ignorance of such subjects compelled her to remove, with evident displeasure, to a retired corner of the room in order to conceal her incapacity to understand them. Such, at least, she appeared to me when I was in the habit of meeting her. Having since become Princess Borghèse, and resided in that splendid and classic land of Italy, the very atmosphere of which appears calculated to instil into every mind an admiration for the fine arts, she may have acquired some notions upon subjects of which she had formerly been utterly ignorant. I merely state what has come under my observation and what was a matter of notoriety. Flattery may at a later period have stooped to the most degrading adulation, and succeeded in conveying the impression

that a sister of the great Napoleon must necessarily be a woman gifted with every quality ; but at the period I speak of, her unrivalled personal attractions were alone the subject of enthusiastic praise. This was no more than justice ; and whatever could be said of her beauty fell short of the truth.

Without pretending to enter into the details of her private life, it cannot but be acknowledged that her morals were exceedingly dissolute. It is no more than proper that *contemporary memoirs* should afford some insight into the character of those whom they exhibit to public view ; but my feelings would recoil at following her in her progress, and I doubt that any woman would consent to sully her pen by the recital of such repeated failings. A just sense of what is due to the modesty of our sex enjoins us not to dwell too much upon certain delicate subjects.

Madame Leclerc allowed her favourites to acquire a powerful ascendancy over her, and felt a kind of pride in making a public avowal of her choice. So long as she retained an affection for the man who was the object of her preference, he might make the most extravagant demands upon her, but she pursued with the most unrelenting animosity those who had the misfortune to be no longer in her good graces, or who grew tired of thus exposing themselves to the envy of other men, and to the anger of Napoleon, who bitterly lamented the scandal which his sister's levity of conduct could not fail to provoke.

When she took her departure for St. Domingo, she entertained so undisguised an affection for Lafon, an actor of the Théâtre Français, that Mdle. Duchesnois,

on learning that General Leclerc was to take his wife along with him, exclaimed, in the giddiest manner, before a numerous company :

“ I am really very sorry for it ; Lafon is so fond of her that the separation may kill him ! ”

In vain was it hinted to her by signs that she should avoid such a topic ; she persisted for several minutes in pitying the sad fate of her brother-actor.

Madame Leclerc did not act with more circumspection at a later period ; she gave as free a loose to her transient affections when surrounded with the gorgeous pomp of the most splendid Court. I will instance a few proofs of the little pains she took to conceal them.

M. Jules de Canouville had been for some months the favoured object of the affections of the Princess ; he was remarked for a handsome countenance, a graceful deportment, an excellent heart, and the most tried courage. Having entered the service as a mere private of dragoons, he had attained the rank of a colonel at a time when protection might succeed in procuring any favour except those special rewards which were reserved for a crowd of meritorious officers and soldiers, who were daily exposing their lives in sanguinary conflicts ; the only difficulty in dispensing them was to make the selection, for it was in the power of all to prove the justice of their claims to the rewards thus received. Nothing, therefore, but sheer merit could ever procure any special mark of distinction from the Emperor, and many such were bestowed upon M. de Canouville.

These brilliant advantages were somewhat tarnished, in the eyes of sensible men, by great foppery and indiscretion ; we must acknowledge, however, that these

defects were considered by our sex as additional claims to their regard. They had the weakness to forgive him a conduct which seriously committed them; and were delighted at his readiness to go any lengths to obey their commands. Those ladies were so simple as to ascribe to passionate attachment the violence of a defect which was inherent in M. de Canouville's character; and the very circumstance which would have excited the aversion of any sensible woman was the cause of his succeeding with the Princess. Feeling proud of his success, he urged her to afford him some signal proof of his triumph; the greater readiness she evinced in bestowing favours upon him, the more he demanded of her; this connection at last acquired a deplorable notoriety, occasioned by the indiscreet conduct of both.

M. Bousquet, a celebrated dentist, was sent for to Neuilly (the residence of Princess Pauline), for the purpose of examining the teeth of her imperial highness and of cleaning them. Being introduced into her presence, he prepared to commence operations.

"Sir," said a handsome young man, in a morning gown, who was carelessly stretched upon a couch, "I request you to pay great attention to what you are about. I am extremely careful of the teeth of my Paulette; and you shall be answerable to me for any accident."

"Be not uneasy, Prince; I can assure your imperial highness that there is not the slightest danger."

During the whole time that M. Bousquet was engaged in cleaning this handsome set of teeth, the injunctions were unceasing; when at last he had com-

pleted his work, he withdrew to the attendance-room where the ladies of the palace, the chamberlains, &c., were in waiting, expecting the moment when they might repair to the presence of the Princess. Everyone made the most anxious enquiries of M. Bousquet, to which he replied in these words :

“ Her imperial highness is quite well, and must be delighted at the tender affection of her august consort, who has just given her in my presence the most affecting proofs of his attachment. Nothing could exceed his anxiety, and I had the utmost difficulty in calming the uneasiness he felt at the possible consequences of what was a very simple operation. Wherever I may go I shall take especial care to relate what I have seen. It is truly delightful to be able to record such proofs of conjugal tenderness in so elevated a rank. It has made a deep impression upon my mind.”

No one attempted to check the worthy M. Bousquet in his enthusiastic expressions, nor to utter a single word, for fear of indulging in a laugh at his mistake ; and he took his departure under the conviction that the Prince and the Princess Borghèse were models of conjugal felicity. The Prince, however, was in Italy, and M. de Canouville was the handsome young man he had seen !

Similar topics for scandal were but too often renewed ; the attendants upon this Court were not only compelled to submit to the necessity of suppressing the feelings of disgust which such scenes could not fail to inspire, but even to praise the woman who was the guilty occasion of them. None would have dared to praise the charms of a virtuous life in her presence ; such praise would have been the bitterest reflection upon

her conduct. At present, however, anyone who should be bold enough to pretend admiration for that Court would justly incur the charge of adulation !

Princess Borghèse gave a magnificent ball, which was attended by all the Imperial family. The Viceroy was to dance with the Queen of Naples ; he had already taken his place, when M. de Canouville rushed towards the orchestra, and called out to Julien, the leader of the band,—

“Strike up a waltz.”

“A country dance, sir, has been called.”

“I insist upon a waltz.”

The viceroy had come up in the interval, and he observed that in attention to the order previously laid down a country dance ought to be played.

“Very possibly, monseigneur,” impetuously exclaimed M. de Canouville ; “but as I am to waltz with Princess Borghèse I repeat that I must have a waltz. Come, Julien, obey instantly.”

“And I, sir,” said the viceroy to Julien, in a mild tone of voice, “*I request you will have the goodness to play the country dance.*”

The Prince’s wish was obeyed, several persons having got’round M. de Canouville, and expostulated with him on his unbecoming conduct.

The extraordinary moderation of the viceroy was soon reported all over Paris, and tended to increase the affection so generally entertained for him, as it proved that he possessed the amiable qualities of a private life in as eminent a degree as acknowledged valour on the field of battle. He was satisfied with opposing a calm deportment to an unaccountable act of folly, when a

single word from him would have ruined the man who thus presumed to oppose his wish. It is, in fact, by such distinguished traits of character that princes should be revenged on insults offered to them.

Napoleon was presented by the Emperor of Russia with a very valuable furred robe, lined with ermine. Madame Borghèse burst out into so many exclamations at the happiness of her brother in possessing such beautiful fur, that he resigned the present to her, which she accepted with rapturous delight. On arriving at the Elysée her whole conversation turned upon the subject of the furred robe. Feeling annoyed at seeing the attention of the society wholly engrossed by it, M. de Canouville shewed symptoms of displeasure, and was loud in his complaints. In spite of every explanation, he persisted in saying that the present was preferred to every other object. The Princess immediately gave way, by requesting he would take it home and have it made into a Turkish dress for himself, and a lining for a hussar jacket.

Without reflecting upon the possible displeasure of the Emperor, M. de Canouville applied to his own use this magnificent piece of fur, and repaired to the parade in an elegant hussar uniform. He was mounted on a rather fiery horse, which he was at first unable to master, and created some confusion in the ranks; Napoleon instantly rode up at full speed to enquire what could obstruct the evolutions of a squadron of cavalry, the manœuvres of which were in general so correct; he no sooner cast his eyes upon M. de Canouville than he beheld the present he had given to his sister a few days before. "M. de Canouville," he exclaimed, in the violence

of his anger, "your horse is too fiery for a parade; you must train him by going to Russia, where you will command a regiment with more credit to yourself than you can reap here; and I trust that both you and your horse will return in a quieter mood."

M. de Canouville accordingly took his departure, leaving the Princess a prey to the deepest sorrow. His conduct was beyond all praise; he won the affection of every person under his orders and of his brother officers, as well as the esteem of his chiefs; he was unfortunately killed at the close of a brilliant engagement by the shot of a cannon which the soldiers were firing at random; he was regretted by the whole army.

There was found upon his person a very striking portrait of the Princess, set in diamonds; it was immediately brought to the King of Naples, who had it conveyed to his sister-in-law. The latter never failed sending every fortnight a courier to Russia, who was directed to see and speak to M. de Canouville, as she was not satisfied at merely receiving a letter from him.

M. Ernest de Canouville, comptroller of the Emperor's household, was brother of the officer to whom I have just alluded; he was remarked for nothing more than a perfect knowledge of dancing, which enabled him to rival the first *figurante* of the opera; whilst he was engaged in that occupation, his brother was fighting like a hero in defence of his country. The talent of M. Ernest de Canouville was not in keeping with his phlegmatic and austere countenance any more than with his pedantic character; he was at sixteen years of age what he is no doubt at the present day, very grave in his appearance, fully satisfied of his own

merit (which everyone else failed to discover), and of as *economical* a disposition as his brother was lavish and generous. I am not aware what has become of him; but for his sake I think it a great pity that fashion should require a man to walk a dance; he must now be much at a loss how to pass his time in society.

## CHAPTER XLII

BALL AT THE PRINCE DE NEUFCHÂTEL'S—MADAME FOY—  
I LOSE MY MOTHER IN THE CROWD—I AM SPOKEN TO  
BY QUEEN HORTENSE, AND BY THE EMPEROR — MY  
BLUNTNESS — DETAILS RESPECTING MADAME FOY—  
COLONEL LAMOTTE-HOUDARD — MARRIAGE OF GENERAL  
FOY

THE Prince de Neufchâtel gave the most splendid fêtes at this period. He inhabited the hotel now occupied by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and had caused to be added to it the wing which runs along the garden and formed an immense gallery connected with the apartments reserved for dancing on the ground floor. Supper was laid out on the first floor; the tables were of twelve covers each, with the exception of the Princess's table, at which the members of the Imperial family sat down, as well as the foreign princes who came to pay their court to Napoleon, and a few high dignitaries of the Empire.

We were invited to one of those balls given on the occasion of the birth of the King of Rome; the Empress allowed us to return to Paris for a few days that we might prepare for the ball, which was to be a masked one, and recruit our strength after the fatigue of it. A handsome costume would have entailed a very heavy expense upon us; my mother, Madame Foy, another

lady and myself, all agreed to go there in dominos, a costume which was allowed. Being unused to this species of pleasure, I was delighted at the opportunity of being enabled to enjoy an amusement which I did not think it possible I could ever be tired of. Madame Foy, to whom those crowded assemblies, which fashion has agreed to call delightful, were extremely familiar, foretold to me that I should not be a single hour in the crowd without regretting my having gone there; I could not venture to utter a word from under the mask I was to assume; the evening would therefore appear an age, and were she not married it would have as little charms for her, since she would be unable as a single woman to carry on any intrigue. Notwithstanding my reliance upon her judgment, I persisted in maintaining that I could not fail to enjoy the giddy scene.

I lost no time in preparing; and had my hair dressed with a wreath of flowers, according to the prevailing custom, in order not to present too repulsive an appearance when it would become necessary to unmask for supper. After having hurried the other ladies with unwarrantable impatience, I stepped into the carriage with a delight bordering upon folly. We started from the Rue Royale, and upon reaching the boulevard, fell into the line of carriages, and my impatience exceeded all bounds when I found that for every two paces we advanced, we retrograded three. What with letting down the glass in front, urging the coachman to gain upon the other equipages and looking out of the carriage window to ascertain if we were in sight of the hotel, I worked myself into a state of useless agitation, and began to discover that Court balls were

not scenes of unalloyed enjoyment. Madame Foy smiled at my distress, but was too kind-hearted to laugh at or increase it by the detail of what would presently happen to me. After the delay of an hour and a half, which appeared an age to my impatient feelings, we reached the busy scene with the utmost difficulty, and nearly crushed to death, when I soon became convinced of the correctness of my amiable friend's observations. The more we advanced towards the elegant ball-room, the greater was our dilemma; and it was only after extraordinary exertions that we succeeded in finding a few vacant places on a bench; by this time I was quite overpowered with fatigue. I was passionately fond of dancing; finding, however, that the dominos cut a very sorry appearance near the beautiful costumes of the crowd of handsome young ladies who were figuring away before me, I determined not to stir. Being completely disguised by my mask, not a word was addressed to me; my mother was heartily tired of the scene, this was also the case with myself; unwilling, however, to acknowledge it, I set about contemplating the splendour that surrounded me, by way of diversion to my disappointed feelings.

The female part of the company vied with each other in the choice of their toilets, which were all equally elegant, each lady having selected the most becoming attire. Gold and diamonds were seen glittering in every direction; those brilliant pictures were reflected by mirrors illumined with a profuse quantity of wax lights; and several boxes of flowers tastefully arranged between pillars spread the most delightful fragrance. I really fancied myself transported by magic into one of the

enchanted palaces of the Arabian tales, and I could not withhold from my mother the expression of my delight. All on a sudden, as I lifted up my head, I broke out into so loud a laugh that my neighbours enquired the cause of a mirth so unusual in such an assembly, where the risible propensities are as subject to etiquette as every motion or salute. I was unable to reply, or contain myself; my mother scolded me in an undertone of voice, saying that I was exposing myself to the public gaze, and nothing more could be more out of keeping with good taste. This advice was lost upon me; at last, I pointed with my finger to a tribune where the musicians were standing; they were all obliged to wear dominos, and their singular countenances would have afforded subjects for the lively pencil of a Martel, a Vigneron, or a Charlet. Julien, the negro, wrapped up in a rose-coloured Capuchin dress with a handsome lining, cut the most extraordinary figure I ever saw; another violin player, powdered up to his ears, had a no less strange appearance under a sky-blue cowl; I was quite astonished at the stern gravity of every one to whom I pointed out those caricatures which seemed to me so ludicrous; long habit had robbed them of the merit of novelty, and the so-fantastically dressed orchestra was less a subject of mirth to myself than my amazement was to the company.

Anxious that I should escape the illiberal remarks of my neighbours on my want of knowledge of the world, my mother proposed that we should move to another apartment. I instantly agreed, and we proceeded to that in which the quadrille of the princesses was said to be going on. On reaching a door that was beset with company going in or out, I was on a sudden separated

from my mother, and carried to some distance from her without having it in my power to join her again. I was quite beside myself, and unconscious of what I was doing; I took off my mask and searched for her in every corner of the apartment which I had found so much difficulty in reaching; unable to restrain my agitated feelings I questioned every one I met, and called out, "Where is my mamma? have you seen my mamma?" The gazing multitude laughed at my distress, and as I was a perfect stranger in the place, everyone passed me without uttering a word; at last, after a few moments of indescribable anguish, I met M. Gazani, who with his usual kindness offered his arm to assist me in finding out a mother who was the object of my anxious enquiries. Never was a more opportune service rendered in a more obliging manner.

We went over various apartments, and whilst I was seeking in every corner for the object of my enquiries, two black dominos came up to me. One of them said that I had, no doubt, a coquettish motive for taking off my mask, since it was usual for those who wore that unpretending costume to preserve it the whole evening.

"Coquettishness, indeed! Would that I were far from here, for I can assure you that I have not the smallest desire of making a conquest in this place."

"Is it possible you do not enjoy the scene; you, mademoiselle, who are so lively, and so fond of dancing?" rejoined the little mask, laying hold of my arm.

"Not I, indeed! Have I not told you that I have had a surfeit of it? I am seeking for my mother, and your questions have no other effect than to heighten my distaste for this fatiguing ball. I meet with nothing to-day but annoyance from everyone."

"Nevertheless, I am determined not to part with you so soon. Are you going to-morrow to the concert of Queen Hortense?"

"I am, indeed, to my sorrow; if that party should be as entertaining and agreeable as this one has been to me, I shall have passed a very pleasant week!"

I uttered the last words with increased peevishness, and forcing myself away from the domino, who seemed to have at heart to torment me, I dragged M. Gazani along to another part of the saloon, where I at last found my mother. M. Gazani, after bestowing a few moments to the recital of my unlucky adventure, told me that he believed I had made an egregious mistake by the harsh replies I had just given.

"How is this?" I hastily asked; "I do not believe I have been guilty of any mistake."

"I really suspect, mademoiselle, that the domino you have so roughly treated is the Queen of Holland."

"That, indeed, would give the finishing stroke to my misadventures."

"I am confident that it was the Queen's voice and address."

I wished to persuade myself that he was wrong; but that ill-disguised tone of voice resounded in my ears, and I was unable to dispel a feeling of uneasiness which I vainly attempted to combat, and which increased my anxiety to withdraw from the place where so many unpleasant circumstances had with unerring fatality assailed me.

We were unable to overtake Madame Foy, whose habit of appearing at masked balls, together with her graceful and lively wit, enabled her to take a prominent

part in the scene, and to intrigue with anyone upon whom she condescended to bestow attention. We therefore took our departure without waiting for her.

Previously to entering into any details respecting the concert of Queen Hortense, to which we were invited for the ensuing day, I cannot avoid saying a few words respecting the charming woman of whom I have just spoken; she has inspired me with a friendship too ardent to be ever obliterated by absence. Circumstances have separated us from each other; but the time when she treated me like a sister was one of such unalloyed happiness to me that I wish to dwell, however briefly, upon it; it will be the means of reviving some of the pleasantest illusions of my youth.

The wife of one of our most celebrated orators and most distinguished generals could not fail to interest all France, which has sympathised in her well-founded grief; it almost becomes a duty for me to relate what I know of her, as it will prove to my fellow-countrymen that General Foy could not fail to enjoy domestic happiness; unfortunately the hand of death brought his existence to too early a close.

General Baraguay d'Hilliers married from affection Madame Daniel, the widow of an officer. This lady had been left with two children, who were adopted by her second husband, and treated by him with a tenderness which never experienced any change. The eldest, Mdlle. Lise d'Hilliers, was remarkable for her beauty, her wit, and a singular facility for learning whatever she undertook; her buoyancy of spirits, added to her uniform gentleness of temper, rendered her a valuable and delightful acquaintance. Having been brought up by her mother, a lady of sterling qualities, she com-

bined solid knowledge with those talents which contribute to embellish it.

She was betrothed to Colonel Lamotte-Houdard, one of the most gallant officers in the army; everything was preparing for the marriage, which was to be celebrated at the estate of General d'Hilliers; the bridal dress was ready, and the wedding gift presented; the wreaths of flowers that were to ornament the chapel were prepared, the neighbours invited to attend the ceremony, which was to secure the happiness of the young lady who was the object of general homage and admiration. A courier arrived with an order for M. Lamotte to join the grand army without delay. He was aware that with Napoleon a single hour was often sufficient to secure an imperishable renown; he would not, therefore, devote a single moment to love, notwithstanding the urgent entreaties made to induce him to accelerate the celebration of the marriage; he tore himself away from a family which already cherished him as a son.

"In a few days, perhaps," exclaimed the colonel, "there will remain of me nothing more than a name to add to the list of those men who have died fighting for their country. I have had an anticipation of the happiness that awaited me! that is something! Farewell."

He took his departure, and hastened to join the chief who had already so often led him on the road to victory. The joy that lately beamed on every countenance was turned into sorrow, and a mournful truth verified on this occasion those cruel presentiments by which lovers are so often disappointed, persuaded as they are that everything must be fatal to them from the moment they are compelled to separate. Colonel Lamotte, after fighting many engagements in a manner worthy of his splendid

military renown, was killed, I believe, at the battle of Austerlitz.

The mental energy of Mdlle. d'Hilliers made her deeply sensible of the loss she had experienced. Her health was even so much affected by it as to create some uneasiness. The faculty were of opinion that a change of residence could alone cure her of that tendency to decline, which began to shew itself. She therefore accompanied her father into Italy, where he held a command; it was there that she became acquainted with General Foy, whose attentions she at first received with perfect indifference. By degrees she was unable to resist the effect of those distinguished qualities, which were but the forerunner of the future elevation of the man whom they adorned; urged by her family, and attracted by the irresistible ascendancy of an officer of such universal merit, she consented to a union which was too soon torn asunder.

I can well recollect seeing her, in her exultation at the choice she had made of a husband, reading with undissembled pride the letters full of eloquence and tenderness which he addressed to her from Portugal. We have altogether lost sight of each other, our connections in society being totally different. Attempts have since been made to bring such reports to me respecting her as would have compelled me to alter my opinion of her character. I feel pleasure in having always refused to credit them, and believe that a party spirit could alone have dictated such calumnious imputations. If she should chance to read my "Memoirs," she will find in them the assurance that I am unchanged, and she will share in the satisfaction I have felt in recalling to mind an early acquaintance.

## CHAPTER XLIII

PARTY GIVEN BY QUEEN HORTENSE — M. DE FLAHAULT SINGS — WITTY REPLY MADE BY HIM — HIS MOTHER, MADAME DE SOUZA — MDLLE. DE BOURGOING — THE COUNTESS DE BROCQ — THE DUCHESSES AUGEREAU, MONTEBELLO AND BASSANO — ANECDOTE AT FONTAINE-BLEAU

WE reached the residence of Queen Hortense at a late hour, our humble equipage having found some difficulty in making its way through the elegant carriages which choked up the street. Proud of the livery which was a badge of their dependence, the coachmen, exultingly holding the reins which checked the fiery ardour of a handsome pair of horses, were lavish of their jokes and ante-chamber wit, the character of which was far too sublime to be understood by the modest driver of wretched hacks that had become worn out in the service of the public. The repeated lashes aimed at them by the proud carriage drivers were insufficient to extricate us from our embarrassment. We were upwards of an hour in reaching the gateway, where it became necessary for us to alight. Fortunately, however, the weather was very fine, and we reached the hall without encountering the accident I so much dreaded on account of my white shoes. We were, indeed, stared at by the porter and footmen with a slight emotion of contempt

which brought the colour to my cheeks ; but this wound to my self-love was so soon over that I had already recovered from it before we reached the top of the staircase.

The saloons were full of company, and the piano-forte was in the apartment where the Queen had stationed herself. That apartment could only be reached by passing through several others, by elbowing men loaded with decorations and embroidered dresses, and ladies glittering in the splendour of their attire. I trod upon some, got entangled with the handsome fringes of others, curtsying all the while to those I had met at Malmaison. I felt that I was behaving awkwardly, and experienced the utmost embarrassment and uneasiness, which greatly increased as I approached the Queen ; I became at last completely disconcerted. What she told me was assuredly not calculated to restore my self-possession, as the reader will now have an opportunity of judging.

“Good evening, mademoiselle ; are you in better temper than yesterday ? I must tell you that you do not shine at a masked ball. You will ask how that happened ? Well, then, I went up to speak to you, and you replied in a tone of harshness and ill humour, which is certainly foreign from your usual manners.”

“Madam, I was at a loss to find my mother, and I acknowledge——”

“Yes, I know it ; nevertheless, that was not a motive for treating me as you did.”

“I was unconscious that your majesty had condescended——”

“Unquestionably, you could not guess who I was ;

it is an excellent lesson for the future, which will, I trust, induce you to be always obliging to everyone; I am distressed at yesterday's occurrence; I only came up for the purpose of countenancing you; and it must be owned you cannot be accused of having met me half-way. But to the fact. The gentleman who attended me was anxious to become acquainted with you; he knows my mother's partiality for you, and wished to discover how far her taste was correct. He could only do so by ascertaining your mental qualities, by forming some notion of your manners, and, in short, by not being satisfied with beholding a pretty face. You did not, however, set off those qualities to advantage. You may judge of my mortification at the tone you assumed; for this domino, whose curiosity was so much excited, was no other than—the Emperor!"

I was overpowered at these words; for I must own I could not disguise from myself that I had never been so disagreeable as on the occasion of the ball of the preceding night; nevertheless, at no other time could I have been more ambitious of shining, in order to justify the attentions that were shewn to me. To have failed in proving myself worthy of the protection of the Empress appeared to me a mark of ingratitude as heinous on my part as if it had been intentional. The Emperor must have felt surprised that so much kindness should be bestowed upon a person who could only appear in his sight an ill-mannered girl.

When the Queen found that my countenance began to assume a character of the most painful emotion, she addressed a few kind words to me with her accustomed gracefulness of manner, and assured me that she had

said to the Emperor whatever was calculated to soften down the unfavourable impression occasioned by my ill-timed roughness of behaviour. He had greatly enjoyed an openness of manner to which he was no longer accustomed, and of which all trace was obliterated, except in the camp, where his soldiers retained it in their intercourse with him; he was far from finding fault with it.

I was not much flattered at the circumstance that the camp alone afforded a parallel to my case; but endeavoured to recover my usual serenity of countenance, and to thank the Queen for condescending to console me; I own that my habitual levity of disposition soon obliterated that unpleasant scene from my mind, and I proceeded to enjoy the pleasure I most delighted in, that of watching the company who surrounded me.

Never had I a freer scope for indulging my favourite passion, for the loveliest woman was found coupled with the most forbidding; the graceful countenance of the Duchess of Conegliano was seen close to the affected Madame Thib——; at no great distance from the elegant Duchess of Montebello the heavy Maréchale S—— displayed her large person and ridiculous toilet; that numerous assembly, in short, presented nothing but striking contrasts.

I met at this party M. de Flahault, with whom I had been in some measure brought up during the emigration, and whose amiable mother, an intimate acquaintance of mine, was unchanged in her disposition, notwithstanding the brilliant fortune she had acquired by marrying M. de Souza, the Portuguese Minister. She received us at all times in the kindest manner, and rendered us many important services, which evidently

proved that she had not far to go for a model when describing a noble and elevated character in her charming literary productions.

M. de Flahault possessed a cheerful countenance, most accomplished manners, together with a graceful wit and a gentle turn of mind, which afforded no indication of that firmness of character he displayed at a later period. He sang remarkably well for the period to which I allude, and that talent was greatly enhanced by his obliging disposition. The Queen requested him to sit down to the piano, a request he obeyed with that becoming simplicity which amateurs are apt to fancy themselves privileged to depart from; they generally impose a heavy penalty upon the company by the dreadful annoyance to which the latter are subjected of soliciting them over and over again, for that which they burn with impatience to do of their own accord, but refuse in conformity to custom. It is high time that such affected airs of excessive self-love should be for ever discarded; that persons of second-rate talents, instead of being urged to come forward, should on the contrary, be compelled to solicit notice; this conduct on both sides would be far more candid and natural.

M. de Flahault displayed all that giddiness which is becoming in a young man, when it does not degenerate into foppery or excessive freedom. His mother was scolding him one day respecting some frivolous act which maternal severity deemed it proper to rebuke.

"I really think, madam," he replied, "that you would wish my beard to grow white."

This witty reply put an end to the sermon she was beginning to preach to him.

Garat, who was of the party, was also requested to sing; and as he had given me a few lessons he determined to play me a trick, and announced to the Queen his intention of requesting me to sing with him the duet of *Crudel perché fin ora*; I really think I could have struck him in pure spite; to be compelled to sing before so numerous an assembly, in which I had but few acquaintances, and only one friend, whom I shall presently name, seemed to me a most serious misfortune; wishing, however, to avoid being any longer subjected to the gaze of everyone, I determined to get through the part as soon as possible, and trembling like a leaf I accompanied Garat and my mother to the pianoforte. I may venture to say that no one could have been tired of my performance; for my voice was so much impeded by fear that I was unable to articulate a sound: the duet was a mere solo, which fell altogether to Garat's lot.

On returning to my seat, I found myself near M<sup>lle</sup>. de Bourgoing, who was afterwards married to Marshal Macdonald, and was torn by a premature death from a family that idolized her, and from a circle of friends to whom she had set by her conduct so bright an example for imitation. Her character retained to the last its wonted amiability; she also displayed an obliging and gentle disposition, which formed the ground-work of that character. United in our earliest infancy, we were for a long time absent from each other. Her immense fortune, the honours by which she was surrounded, could not but remove her still further from me, as I had remained from choice in a state of obscurity, and should have felt wearied and annoyed at never finding myself alone, and at liberty to enjoy a friend's society:

the delightful sentiment of friendship must fail to spread its enchantment over the moments which are dedicated to it, if there exist too great a difference in the relative positions of those who are united in its gentle bands; the contrast destroys all sympathy; a variety of emotions, which ought to be common to both friends, or of sensations which should be simultaneously felt, can only find access in one heart! As soon as Mdlle. de Bourgoing became a duchess and the wife of a French marshal, it was a necessary consequence that we should cease to meet, though, perhaps, not that we should be perfect strangers to each other.

Feeling persuaded of the impossibility of keeping up any mutual intimacy, where the respective stations in society are no longer the same, I have always given up my friends as soon as a brilliant marriage threw them into a new sphere in which I was unable to follow them; divested of all ambition, I avoided them as soon as they became possessed of advantages which did not appear to me to constitute happiness, though they drew around them a crowd of unmeaning acquaintances. I always felt an interest in them, inwardly participated in their good fortune, sympathized in their sorrows, but invariably kept aloof from their society.

The Duchess of Tarentum afforded me a clear proof that I had correctly estimated her sentiments, when I judged of them by consulting my own heart. Apprised of the loss of my father, she wrote me on that occasion a kind and amiable letter, which greatly affected me. At a later period she afforded me another proof that our early friendship was still fresh in her recollection.

I applied to her to solicit the Marshal's protection

for a poor orphan, the daughter of a serjeant who had received a decoration of honour, and had fallen on the field of battle. My object was to procure the girl's admission into St. Denis. I could not fail to interest the Duchess by describing to her the unfortunate situation of this child, who had remained under the care of a grandmother, though the latter was reduced to the necessity of working for her livelihood. A few days after my request I received the warrant which secured an honourable asylum and a good education to the poor orphan. She was admitted into that establishment, where the daughters of so many gallant men received the affecting reward secured to them by the glory which their parents had acquired.<sup>1</sup>

How melancholy is the reflection that my gratitude for a service rendered in so obliging a manner should be directed to the mere shadow of a departed friend ! . . .

My attention was attracted to a lady near Queen Hortense, whose elegant toilet and somewhat bold demeanour indicated pretensions which formed a strange contrast with a long and ungraceful figure, and with a countenance whose strongly-marked features possessed nothing to recommend them. I was informed that this was Mdlle. Cochelet, a reader, who had risen from an inferior situation to become the Queen's favourite. It was said that nothing took place in her majesty's household without her being previously consulted. I wondered at the extraordinary favour she enjoyed, though my astonishment was grounded upon nothing else than the aversion which her appearance had excited in my mind.

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x The Baroness de Bourgoing, who superintends the royal establishment at St. Denis, is the mother of the Duchess of Tarentum.

My usual giddiness again led me to form a rash judgment on this occasion. Her fidelity and devotedness to her sovereign proved that she was worthy of inspiring a sincere attachment. It is asserted by those who knew her that she is much courted in society for her wit and varied talents. This was one of the many occasions on which my judgment was completely at fault.

Mdlle. Cochelet has since been advantageously married, and resides in Switzerland, near her friend, upon whom she continues to bestow the most affectionate attentions.

I met for the first time at this party one of the most lovely women of the Court of Queen Hortense; she has been so universally regretted that to name her is to point out the many qualities which adorned her: this was Madame de Brocq! . . . . Though dressed in the plainest style, she appeared to me to eclipse all those who surrounded her, not so much from possessing any extraordinary beauty, or from immediately attracting notice; many women might boast a prettier nose, a lovelier mouth, or a fairer colour; but none could lay claim to finer eyes; they were expressive of wit and gentleness combined; and it was impossible to be noticed by Madame de Brocq without feeling an attachment for her. The kind of carelessness which she displayed in all her movements gave her a peculiar charm which I never discovered in anyone else. The interest she inspired by the tender expression of her countenance could not fail to grow into friendship whenever she took the least pains to encourage that sentiment; but she appeared, as it were, anxious to fly from every tender feeling, as if apprehensive of being diverted from the

subject of her habitual meditations—the memory of her husband whom she had lost, to the best of my recollection, two years before that period. It would have been very difficult to introduce mirth and cheerfulness in any conversation with her ; nevertheless, she was not absolutely plunged in melancholy ; she would even make an effort to join in social conversation. Her smile, however, always appeared constrained ; and so far from its exciting any pleasure, it was almost painful in anyone to perceive that they had provoked it ; it formed too striking a contrast with a physiognomy which might have served as a model for portraying the figure of Melancholy. Madame de Brocq's countenance exhibited its vacant stare and its attractive appearance.<sup>1</sup>

Many women famed for beauty were at this party and attracted the notice of the company under different aspects. The Duchess de Bassano was, in my opinion, distinguished above the rest by her well-proportioned features and elegant shape. I was acquainted with many affecting traits in her character which tended, perhaps, to enhance the beauty of her physiognomy. It indicated to my fancy every quality which adorns a wife of irreproachable conduct, a most tender mother, a safe and devoted friend ; and I looked at her with the greater pleasure, as she had displayed the most con-

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1 It is well known that this charming woman perished in Switzerland within view of the Queen, who saw her roll down a frightful precipice from which she was drawn up a lifeless and dreadfully-mangled corpse ! Her majesty's despair knew no bounds, and her poignant grief was shared by all those who had had an opportunity of appreciating the virtues, the talents, and the character of the Countess de Brocq. She was the sister of Madame la Maréchale Ney.

siderate kindness to an individual of my family. I have always felt an inward delight in the opportunity of discovering female qualities, and paying them the tribute of my admiration; I conceive that those qualities redound to the honour of the whole sex, and that I could not fail to derive my share of the encomium.

Madame de Bassano was too handsome a woman, her husband was too influential, too much loaded with the favours of his sovereign, for her to have escaped the attacks of calumny; it is ever ardent in persecuting merit, and is sparing of none but those who fail to excite envious feelings. Madame de Bassano calmly opposed to its bitter shafts the consciousness of a rectitude of conduct, to which the Emperor bore ample testimony on various occasions.

His successful career of intrigue with a great number of ladies who courted his notice inspired him, it is said, with the idea of pleasing Madame de Bassano. He was assiduous in his attentions to her; but she replied to them with a respectful coldness of deportment which must have satisfied him that, in her case, at least, he would be compelled to acknowledge that he had failed in his guilty views.

He one day met Madame de Bassano in the gallery of the Palace of Fontainebleau, took hold of her arm, and made her the most unequivocal and ardent declaration.

“Sire, were I to apprise my husband of this he never would believe that the sovereign whom he is serving with so much attachment could attempt to rob him of his domestic happiness. How can you, sire, attempt to disturb it? I am now under the necessity of assuring your majesty that, if your persecuting

attentions do not immediately cease, I shall disclose them to my husband, who will ever remain the exclusive object of my undivided affection. I know enough of him to be satisfied that he would immediately resign all his appointments at Court, and withdraw from it in my company."

"He would not dare to do so, madam."

"Your majesty is much mistaken; he will dare anything to escape from the mortifying conviction of the ingratitude of the man who possesses his unbounded attachment."

So saying she forced her hand away from Napoleon who held it within his grasp, and fled in the greatest hurry.

"Calm your agitation, madam," exclaimed Napoleon, transported with anger, "you need not run so fast, you are as silly as you are handsome; I am now cured of my folly."

He maintained for some time a cold and sullen deportment towards Madame de Bassano; but he afterwards redoubled his respectful attentions to her, and quoted her as an example worthy of imitation.

This anecdote was related to me by a person who vouched for its accuracy. I cannot give it for a fact; but as it is highly honourable to Madame de Bassano's memory, I have deemed it proper to record it in this place. If untrue, the mere fiction is a signal homage paid to virtue.

## CHAPTER XLIV

MASKED BALL AT THE TUILERIES—ELEGANCE OF THE  
QUADRILLES—MESDAMES DE MENOU, GRAVILLE, VILLE-  
NEUVE, DULAULOY—MM. PERREGAUX, DESAIX, AND  
FLAHAULT—THE EMPEROR COMPLETELY MASKED COM-  
PELS MADAME CR \* \* TO RETIRE FROM THE FÊTE—  
HE OFTEN CHANGES HIS DOMINO—ABSURD SPIRIT OF  
ECONOMY—WE RETURN TO MALMAISON—M. AND MADAME  
VANBERGHEN—INCREASING ENVY AMONGST THE LADIES  
—MM. DE ROHAN, DE LA VAUGUYON

I AM unable at this distance of time to state on what occasion a masked ball was given at the Tuileries; but I well recollect that there were upwards of a thousand persons invited who had not been presented at Court. They were stationed in the first and second tiers of boxes of the theatre, and were neither at liberty to move from that spot nor to appear in disguise. Every individual composing the Emperor's Court wore a costume in character or a domino; and the pit, which had been raised to a level with the stage, was used as a ball-room. Wreaths of flowers, numerous and splendid lustres, and the brilliant toilets of the ladies, combined to present a *coup d'œil* of unparalleled beauty.

As the hour struck ten, the Empress Maria Louisa made her appearance, followed by a long train of personal attendants and of the Emperor's household. She had.

adopted the costume of a *cauchoise*, which well became her commanding figure. She no sooner sat down than the Princesses' quadrilles were introduced to the sound of war-like music; that of the Queen of Naples represented every different costume of Italy with the greatest accuracy; the only addition to them was silver embroidery and a multitude of precious stones. It was completely eclipsed by the quadrille of Queen Hortense, which represented the Peruvians repairing to the Temple of the Sun; Mesdames de Menou, de Graville, de Ville-neuve, &c., led by MM. Perregaux, Desaix, Flahault, and a crowd of other gentlemen followed in the train of the Queen, whose elegant figure and beautiful foot appeared to great advantage under a light vestment flounced with feathers.

The high priestess, represented by the handsome Madame Dulauloy, seemed born to command. Her majestic and dignified countenance was peculiarly calculated to inspire that feeling of respect which it was impossible to refuse her. I saw the moment when the whole assembly was on the point of following the example of her subjects, who were allowed the privilege of bending the knee to her. Her unparalleled beauty called forth a general burst of admiration. As soon as the quadrilles were over the country dances began, and the attendants upon the Court entered into conversation with the less-favoured crowd who occupied the first tier of boxes. It was impossible to distinguish the Emperor. He was lost in a crowd of dominos of all colours, engaged in the sport of perplexing us plebeians, who felt proud at being noticed by them, though intent, however, upon watching the dense crowd in which I could not discover

a vacant space. I fancied I saw a grey domino followed by a couple of tall black figures, who seemed to have been placed there for the purpose of keeping watch upon *the master*, and especially upon those who might come too closely into contact with him. From that moment my whole attention was rivetted upon the group, and I acquired the conviction that I was not mistaken.

The grey domino came up to a very handsome lady, loaded with diamonds; she was seated at a very short distance from me. His majesty kept his eyes fixed upon her for some moments with his arms behind his back, and without uttering a single word. She blushed, became greatly agitated, and ended by saying in a tremulous voice to her troublesome observer, that she was not conscious of knowing him. Not a word was uttered in reply by the stranger, who appeared fixed to the spot in front of the disconcerted lady. She suddenly rose from her seat in the utmost haste, and exclaimed in a terrified voice :

“*That look is peculiar to the Emperor!* How I repent having come to this place!”

She speedily left the palace, and the rumour spread around us that this lady who had acquired some celebrity by a notable adventure, which was followed by a divorce, had not been invited; that she had with unaccountable boldness obtained admission to the fête by a ticket of one of her friends. Napoleon, whose once ardent attachment for her had degenerated into hatred, compelled her in this manner to quit an assembly to which he had refused her admittance. The Emperor's silence had revealed his meaning to her guilty conscience in as forcible a manner as a peremptory order could have done.

She was generally censured for having thus pre-

sumed to brave her sovereign as well as public opinion ; and great praise was bestowed upon the conduct of a man who, having it in his power to command obedience, only resorted to the irresistible ascendancy of a severe and scrutinizing glance.

He disappeared after that singular adventure, which, having soon got into circulation, threw the ball-room into confusion for a moment, by forming the topic of general conversation ; dancing, however, was soon resumed, and lasted until the hour of supper ; the tables were laid in apartments to which none was admitted who had not been formally presented at Court ; they were forced to retire without having had any refreshment, except ices, which were sent round during the whole evening.

This paltry economy appeared altogether misplaced ; it had the effect of disappointing many persons whom his majesty ought not to have invited to his palace if he intended to starve them. To add to the mortification, it was raining in torrents. The equipages of the ministers and high dignitaries were placed before our own carriages, which we had every difficulty in finding out, and we were drenched before we could get to them. My mind has always retained an unpleasant recollection of this fête.<sup>1</sup>

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1 At another fancy ball which was given at Court, a quadrille of twelve persons entered the ball-room, representing *the hours*. Madame de Cr—— in a black crape dress, spangled with silver stars, appeared in the character of *midnight*, which gave rise to a variety of satirical jokes. This lady was far from handsome, and her face was covered with pimples. Someone passing her cried out, "*Midnight gone by*." This expression was not suffered to drop, and the name remained to Madame de Cr——, whose unamiable disposition made her generally disliked.

On our return to Malmaison, I found there M. and Madame Vanberghen, whom I forgot to notice whilst passing in review the society of Navarre of which they formed part. They contributed very little to the enjoyment of our social circle: this is, perhaps, the motive of my omission, which I will now repair with the more pleasure, as it will afford me a further opportunity of proving how much the Empress delighted in being useful to her early friends.

M. Vanberghen was possessed of natural wit, but his education had been wholly neglected. I had known him at Geneva, a man of a lively disposition, and extremely entertaining, from the unconnected style of his conversation consisting of a string of more or less agreeable anecdotes which he related in a peculiar manner. If I recollect rightly, he had been successful in business during the Revolution, at which period he became acquainted with Madame de Beauharnais by meeting her at the house of Madame Tallien, with whom he lived on terms of friendly intimacy. He had the appearance of a Swiss drum-major: was tall, lusty, of a fair complexion, and considered handsome by a few women of fashion; this circumstance accordingly brought him into notice. Being of an obliging and extravagant disposition, he was surrounded by flatterers, who, I believe, advanced their fortunes by helping him to squander a portion of his own, which some unfavourable speculations were the means of finally upsetting. In the days of his prosperity he had rendered some trifling services to Madame de Beauharnais, who was then in indigent circumstances, and often compelled to have recourse to her friends. She met him on her way

*INSTALLATION OF THE CONSULS  
CAMBACÉRÈS, NAPOLEON, LEBRUN*

*Fragment after the painting by Louis-Charles-Auguste  
Couder*



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through Geneva, instantly recalled to mind what he had done for her, perhaps exaggerated to herself the importance of the services in order to indulge the satisfaction of having a pretext for what she intended to do for him and for his children. Her majesty appointed him leader of the hunt, allowed him an apartment for himself and his family wherever she might reside, and give him a rendezvous at Navarre. He came on a short visit to that palace; but as he had now more experience, and was intent upon repairing his fortune, he appeared in quite a different character from what I had seen him a few months before. He had acquired a calm, sedate, and pensive turn of mind; his frankness of disposition had disappeared, and his constrained conversation was wholly devoid of interest. With as little candour or openness of mind as professed courtiers, he was often inferior to them by a want of knowledge of the world in the midst of which he was suddenly thrown. The topics of horses, of scandal, or of the toilet, were now discarded from conversation. In his attempt to avoid them, M. Vanberghen fell into the contrary extreme. In a word, ambition made him what so many other persons were already, an undesirable companion.

His wife had pretty features, but they were so devoid of life or expression that one grew tired of looking at them; they indicated a great lack of wit, and unfortunately, this was close upon the truth.

After a short stay at Navarre, they took their departure for Paris, and did not arrive at Malmaison until a long time after us. Far from contributing to its social enjoyments, which were indeed but very few,

that residence appearing to be wholly devoted to state representation, they only added to the insipidity of the company; their presence was disagreeable to many who were apprehensive of losing the favour they enjoyed, whilst M. Vanberghen seemed at a loss how to turn to account that portion which had fallen to his share, it appearing to him far short of what he was justly entitled to.

It had not escaped the penetration of the Empress that M. Vanberghen was incapable of doing justice to any place which would have required a dignified deportment and a familiarity with Court etiquette; she had appointed him to the very situation for which he was best calculated; it had been created purposely for him in order not to offend the pretensions of others by giving him a rank above them; the duties of it consisted in nothing more than a thorough knowledge of riding and hunting, occupations which perfectly accorded with his taste and education.

The coldness shewn to my mother and myself by every individual about her majesty's person excited our astonishment. Josephine alone remained unchanged, but we had no difficulty in suspecting that sooner or later she would be prevailed upon to part with us. I ventured on one occasion to intimate to the Empress my apprehensions on the subject; she quieted them by the most obliging expressions, and, in order to remove every doubt from my mind, said she would immediately give directions for my being provided with 3,000 francs, as she had no doubt that my little stock of money stood in need of improvement. "I will also give you my portrait, no one will then doubt any longer of the interest

I take in your welfare. This fresh gift will prove to you my sincere affection and my desire to keep you near me." I believed everything she said with the simplicity of a girl of eighteen; her intentions were too much in accordance with my wishes to allow of my doubting them, and my mind remained at ease for some time longer.<sup>1</sup>

M. de Rohan Chabot<sup>2</sup> came to pay a visit at Malmaison; he held the rank of chamberlain, and had resided a long time at Naples, whence he had just arrived. The Empress addressed a variety of questions to him, and he replied to them in a witty though a timid manner, which was surprising in a man of his age, who had long resided at Court. Her majesty kept him to dinner and shewed him the most marked attention.

M. de la Vauguyon, who had come from Naples, had just been appointed a general of brigade under the special protection of Queen Caroline. He came to Malmaison on the same day as M. de Chabot. The Empress received him very coldly, and said at night, when the company had retired, that she was at a loss to account for his rapid fortune.

"He has nothing more to recommend him than a handsome countenance, and is too vain of that perishable advantage ever to become a man of sterling merit. It is, moreover, his misfortune," added her majesty, "to be ill at ease in good company. As soon as he can make his

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<sup>1</sup> That sum of money was never issued to me, notwithstanding that the order for it had been given in a positive manner; neither did I receive the portrait I so anxiously looked for. The latter is what I most regret being deprived of, for nothing remains to me of Josephine except her hair and a small bust of a tolerable likeness which I purchased at a public sale.

<sup>2</sup> Now Archbishop of Auch.

escape and avoid attending to the duties of his situation, he hastens to relieve himself, in the company of actresses, from the restraint which his ambition has imposed upon him. His manners and deportment savour strongly of those loose habits. He never can converse with any but theatrical women, and is as little familiar with gallantry as with courtesy of behaviour; the freedom and unpolished manners of a coffee-house life or of the green room are alone suitable to his taste; anywhere else he is ill at ease; it is painful to think of it.

“M. de Chabot is a man of a very different stamp; he possesses an innate sense of what is dignified and becoming; he cannot fail to succeed in whatever he may undertake, because he unites to a mind always soaring towards elevated objects that sound judgment which promotes a spirit of reflection, and invariably suggests the proper course of conduct which it becomes him to adopt.”

At that period, however, nothing denoted that M. de Chabot would devote himself to the ecclesiastical profession, in which he is distinguished by such solid virtues, especially by a charitable disposition which has never been found wanting, and of which I might quote many instances were I not afraid of offending him by divulging them to the world. The poor and the infirm, whom he so often relieves, will not be silent on the subject, and the truth will be made known; gratitude will no doubt deem it a necessity to publish such acts of benevolence.

## CHAPTER XLV

CAMBACÈRES COMES TO MALMAISON—JOSEPHINE'S OPINION OF HIM—HER LETTERS TO HIM—CONTEMPLATED FISHING PARTY—IT IS PREVENTED BY A COURIER FROM THE EMPEROR—THE VICEROY'S REGRET—TROUSS, A MAMELUKE—NOBLE TRAIT OF PRINCE EUGÈNE—THE PRINCE OF ASTURIAS SOLICITS A WIFE AT THE EMPEROR'S HANDS—OPINION OF THE EMPRESS RESPECTING NAPOLEON'S MORAL COURAGE

THE arch-chancellor came to breakfast at Malmaison, and the Empress displayed all the charms of her graceful wit in her endeavours to give him a welcome reception. She seemed anxious to persuade him that she was perfectly contented with her fate, felt no regret at the past, and willingly forgave him the share he had taken in bringing about her divorce. He appeared fully sensible of the kind attentions shewn to him, and prolonged his visit in consequence.

"I have a great regard for that man," said Josephine, after he had taken leave, "for he is one of those who have been least lavish of flattery to the Emperor; he has often given me excellent advice, nor was it ever thrown away; it has, on the contrary, proved of essential service to me."

I have had an opportunity of verifying the correctness of Josephine's assertion. The two following letters

were written to him by this Princess, who if occasionally superficial and frivolous, when seeking to place herself on a level with the young ladies about her person, could as readily assume the language of a statesman when it behoved her to sustain the dignity of the elevated rank to which she had been raised.

“ TO THE ARCH-CHANCELLOR.

“SIR,—To-morrow is the day on which I am to give audience to the Senate, and the several public authorities in the Emperor’s absence. Placed in so trying a position, it behoves me, first, to acquaint you with my intention, and secondly, to ask your advice. To whom can I, with more propriety, address myself, than to the illustrious personage who possesses the unbounded confidence of the Emperor, and is justly considered by all Frenchmen as their worthy representative?

“Having received a communication of the several speeches that are to be addressed to me, I naturally send you the replies I think it proper to give to them.

“I remind the Senate, that as the fathers of the country, and the conservators of its institutions, it belongs to them alone to maintain the balance between the several powers without venturing to encroach upon any. The legislative body: that its attributes consist in judging and in voting the laws, especially that of taxation, without interfering in the march of Government, which any pretensions on its part would have the effect of obstructing in its course. The Council of State: that the important duty devolves upon it of preparing, by preliminary discussions, a permanent system of legislation and solid organic laws. The

ministers : that they neither form a corporation, a legislative commission, an administration, nor a Government ; but that in their capacity of superior agents to the latter, and first assistants to the chief of that Government, they either execute its orders, or give directions to that effect ; the latter being nothing more than the immediate consequence of legislative determinations. The clergy : that they form an integral part of the state, but that the state never is, nor can be, within their domain, which is wholly and exclusively extended over consciences ; and that they are to exercise a control over the latter, for the mere purpose of rearing citizens for our common country, soldiers in defence of its territory, subjects for the sovereign, and respectable fathers of families. The magisterial bodies : that, whilst applying the laws without any interpretation, with singleness of purpose, and identity in the legislative system, they must evince their sagacity in adhering to the spirit of the law, so long as it combines the happiness of the governed with the respect due to the governors. The learned bodies : that the mild ascendancy of arts, sciences and literature, moderates the harshness of a military life, which is unavoidable in a period of trials and changes. Manufacturing and commercial bodies : that they can have but two objects in view, which may properly be reduced to a single one—the prosperity of our own, the ruin of English produce ; and lastly, I remind agriculturists that the treasures of France lie buried in its bosom, and that the spade and the plough can alone bring them to light. To the gallant men of our military and naval services I can adduce nothing new ; this

palace is loaded with their trophies ; I shall be addressing them from under a canopy, formed of standards conquered by their valour and sprinkled with their blood.

“ Tell me, with the utmost candour, whether I am sufficiently impressed with the subject upon which I am to address the august assembly to be convened on the occasion.”

“ ANOTHER LETTER TO THE ARCH-CHANCELLOR.

“ M. L'ARCHICHANCELIER,—Allow me to claim a right which my duties impose upon me of relieving the unfortunate, and to appeal to that benevolent anxiety you have always shewn to second my wishes in matters of this nature.

“ My object is to obtain a situation in the Emperor's household for M. Cyrille Desforgues, a man deprived of the advantages of birth, fortune, or protection ; he is unfortunate ! . . . . It behoves, therefore, the Arch-Chancellor and me to relieve him.

“ We are both well aware that the advantage of birth is often available to no other purpose than to become a substitute for real merit ; and the Emperor would still be a sub-lieutenant, if it had required nothing more for attaining the rank of a general officer than to prove his right to four quarters in his heraldic escutcheon. I shall say little on the score of fortune, although the Emperor requires the possession of some property in anyone who may enter into his household ; the real merit, the education, the talents of M. Desforgues sufficiently recommend him to your highness, who will have no hesitation in repairing the neglect of the blind goddess towards him.

“ In the rank in which I am endeavouring to place

him, this worthy man cannot fail to encounter more favoured, more intriguing, and more dexterous rivals; he will not have to fear them; neither shall I apprehend them for him, if you condescend to direct his steps. I feel sanguine in the expectation that you will consent to patronize him, because he is unfortunate and is well worthy of your protection and of mine. I am presenting you with means of exercising your benevolent disposition; by so doing you will lay me under additional obligations."

I consider the above letters as models of a noble and dignified style. They embrace every sentiment that a sovereign should entertain who is sincerely desirous of the happiness and prosperity of his kingdom. . . . But is it possible that I should fall upon the topic of politics, I who am perfectly ignorant of the subject? That I should follow the mania of the present age, which sometimes induces our sex to relinquish the playful frivolousness of conversation so becoming to it, and soar to the gravity so unsuited to its pursuits! I hasten to return to the narrative I have broken off, of events to which I have been an eye-witness, of daily scenes, ill calculated, perhaps, for extraordinary displays, though not deficient in interest in so far as they relate to personages whose names will be handed down to posterity. I have not yet recovered from the alarm into which I have been thrown by finding myself on the verge of giving way to that general propensity of the present day (a species of epidemic disorder), of talking nonsense upon subjects which few people are enabled to discuss with sufficient data to enable them to guide the judgment of their fellow-creatures.

I shall soon come to those times of disturbances, of misfortunes, of disunion, when everyone, more or less, was called upon to act a part or to entertain a fixed opinion. As my way of thinking was like that of most women, purely sentimental, in alluding to those fatal years which have brought about the peaceful days we now enjoy after so many storms, I will speak of them not as an austere censor or a profound politician, but as one who has deeply felt the afflictions entailed upon her country. I will relate what I have seen in language expressive of my feelings; I have treasured up the memory of some actions worthy of being placed upon record, which it will be a consolation for me to make known to the world, and I venture to believe that the truth of my narrative will never be called in question. I now return to Malmaison, previously to taking an everlasting farewell of it.

The viceroy had made up a fishing party, which was to take place on the following day. Here, as well as at Navarre, various fanciful jewels of no intrinsic value were to be the reward of the *conqueror*, and according to the old rule the gentlemen were excluded from this trial of skill. There is no feminine gender for the word *conqueror*, a clear proof that our glory should be limited to the softer duties which nature has imposed upon us; let us be contented with that portion, it is enough to gratify our ambition since it secures the happiness of every object around us.

We were rejoiced beyond measure at the approaching renewal of an amusement we had been for a long time deprived of. Awnings were laid over the boats, and we agreed to rise at the early hour of six o'clock in order to secure a sufficient number of fish to present a dish of

them for the breakfast of her majesty, whose kindness always prompted her to appear gratified at witnessing the enjoyments of others.

We were all assembled in the saloon between the hours of five and six, in costumes suited to the occasion, with our fishing-rods in hand, and all sanguine in our expectations of success (for the self-love of women often extends to mere trifles). We were waiting with impatience the arrival of the General, who was to direct our operations, and forming fanciful schemes, when the viceroy made his appearance in a travelling dress, and holding a packet of papers in his hand.

“Ladies,” he said, “I am truly distressed at having made you rise at so early an hour. I enjoyed the idea of amusing myself in carrying on the war against my mother’s fish, instead of which I must instantly depart for Paris, where I am summoned by the Emperor, and from thence, in all probability, for Italy, where matters of the utmost importance require my presence. An order just received compels me to take leave of the Empress this very moment. How cruel is that fate which constantly prevents us from following our inclinations! In a few hours hence I shall be on the road to Milan; I shall not even have the happiness of remaining with the vice-queen and my children, as I can only enjoy their company for a day. I am merely to take with me the Duke de Litta, and the faithful Trouss who never leaves me. I have no time to prepare for my departure; on this occasion, however, I shall have the consolation when I leave you of travelling as a private individual, of *burning* all addresses, and of enjoying the pleasure to dwell upon every recollection that is dear to

me. The palace of Malmaison will not be forgotten."

This Trouss, who was always mentioned by the Prince with lively emotion, had saved his life in Egypt ; in consequence of one of those events which are of such frequent occurrence in a camp life, the service was soon after repaid by the individual to whom it had been rendered. During a very hot action the gallant Trouss, in his endeavours to parry every blow aimed at his master, was exposed to the most imminent danger. The viceroy, whose composure never forsook him, perceived the peril to which his faithful servant was exposed, and heedless of the numbers of the enemy he had to contend with, he put spurs to his horse, which darted off with the rapidity of lightning, and carried the viceroy into the centre of the group of Austrians that surrounded the poor Trouss, already covered with wounds and on the point of being killed. This unexpected relief revived his drooping strength, and by dint of unparalleled efforts they compelled the Austrians to retreat, the Prince's aides-de-camp having come up in the meanwhile with the determination of defending him or of falling by his side. Regardless of his wounds, Trouss fell upon his knees before his generous deliverer, who pressed him to his heart, saying: "*We are now quits, my friend.*"

This trait was related to me by an eye-witness who took part in the noble deed. His modesty claimed as a condition for telling it that I should not mention his name. I cannot say whether he is still alive, for he has ever since followed the fortunes of his Prince, and has, I believe, remained absent from France. In this uncertainty I keep my promise of concealing the name of an officer who could not have achieved greater glory than that which such an action secured to him, but who is,

nevertheless, entitled to the respect which is at all times due to so noble a character.

The Empress often spoke with regret of the war in Spain. She deplored an enterprise, the result of which was likely to be fatal to France. She entertained an indifferent opinion of the Prince of Asturias, in consequence of his having addressed letters to the Emperor which bespoke a total absence of the dignity becoming to misfortune. She assured us of his having solicited of Napoleon that he would select a wife for him amongst the members of his family, a request which provoked the Emperor's anger.

"Is it possible that any man should so debase himself? I marry him to anyone belonging to me! why, madam, I would refuse him your *femme de chambre*, for I am convinced that she possesses sentiments of far too elevated a nature for such a husband. No princess would have him for a partner; let him amuse himself playing at proverbs at Talleyrand's residence at Valençay; I will give his people a sovereign who will know how to reign over them."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Madame de Talleyrand did all in her power to render the residence of Valençay agreeable to the Spanish Princes. She succeeded in her endeavours; as a proof of which, their royal highnesses were so perfectly regardless of the dreadful condition of their unhappy country, a prey to all the evils entailed upon it by a Revolution and the horrors of civil war, the greatest calamity that can afflict a nation, that they passed their whole time in a round of pleasures and festivities. Such conduct on their part completely paralyzed the interest felt in their misfortunes. Nothing could be more artful than the policy of thus leading them to adopt a course of conduct in direct opposition to what the peculiarity of their situation required of them. Madame de Talleyrand was not to be blamed for this; she followed the dictates of her excellent heart in endeavouring to soften down the misfortunes that oppressed them, and I believe that in so doing she went beyond the wishes of those who surrounded her. An order from Napoleon compelled the Princess of Talleyrand to quit Valençay. She was deeply regretted by her illustrious captives,

We were told by the Empress that Napoleon entertained the strongest conviction of his being destined to conquer every nation of the globe.

“He relies so much upon his lucky star that if he were deserted to-morrow by his family and his allies, and became a proscribed wanderer, he would still cling to life, under the impression that he should triumph over every obstacle, and accomplish his destiny by realizing his boundless projects. Fortunately,” added the Empress with a smile, “we shall never have an opportunity of ascertaining whether my opinion be correct ; rest assured, however, that Napoleon’s strength of mind far exceeds his physical courage. No one knows his character so thoroughly as I do ; he fancies himself a predestined being, and would bear the frowns of fortune with as much composure as he has exhibited temerity in braving the dangers of a field of battle.”

What I have just related will perhaps be deemed the offspring of my own fancy ; nevertheless I can vouch for the *strict accuracy* of the above paragraph. Many persons are still in existence who were present at Josephine’s social conversations, and can join me in declaring that she viewed Napoleon in the light in which he could not fail to be considered, and had foreseen his conduct at the time of the occurrence of events which appeared beyond the reach of human probability, when in the zenith of his power he issued his mandates to the sovereigns he had called into existence, as well as to those whom he had consented to leave in the possession of their thrones.

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who, anxious to prove their gratitude, besought her to accept of what was most valuable to them, their prayer books. King Ferdinand has since transmitted to her from Spain the order of the Queen, accompanied with a highly flattering letter.

## CHAPTER XLVI

AFFECTION OF THE EMPRESS FOR HER GRAND-CHILDREN  
—ANECDOTE RESPECTING THE YOUNG NAPOLEON OF  
HOLLAND—PARTICULARS CONCERNING HIS DEATH—  
DESPAIR OF QUEEN HORTENSE ON THE OCCASION—  
CORVISART—M. HOREAU—M. ET MADAME DE SEMON-  
VILLE—ANECDOTES RELATING TO THEM—THE DUKE DE  
RICHELIEU—M. DE MONTHOLON—MESDAMES JOUBERT  
—M. DE SPARRE

THE Empress was gifted with every feeling of maternal tenderness; and her unbounded affection was naturally extended to her grand-children. A week seldom elapsed without her making numerous purchases of playthings, the packing up of which was superintended by herself. The cases were sent off to Italy, after every object had been carefully examined. She felt the liveliest delight at contemplating the pleasure they would occasion. Oftentimes have I seen the saloon of the Palace of Malmaison bearing a resemblance to the warehouse in the Rue du Coq, and the ladies endeavouring to court her majesty's favour by appearing seriously engaged with dolls and a variety of playthings; the men, by examining the small guns, muskets, &c. For my part, I must acknowledge that I amused myself to my heart's content whenever I felt at

liberty to follow my own inclination; the wooden dolls were far more entertaining to me than the animated ones with whom I was every day expected to converse.

Her majesty related to us that Queen Hortense whilst at the Hague received from her mother, as a new year's gift, an immense case full of the choicest playthings that the ingenuity of Grancher and Giroux could invent. This collection was destined for young Napoleon, whose premature death drove some members of the Imperial family into a state bordering upon despair, and may have given rise to all the occurrences which took place subsequently to that event.

The child was seated near the window, looking towards the park, and appeared to view with indifference the crowd of presents that were spread before him; his looks were constantly directed towards the grand avenue in front of the palace. Feeling impatient at his appearing less delighted than she expected, the Queen asked him if he was not grateful for his grandmamma's attention in procuring every object that might contribute to his amusement?

"Indeed I am, mamma; but I am not surprised at her kindness, she is always so good to me that I am quite accustomed to it."

"Do you find no enjoyment in those pretty toys?"

"Yes, mamma, but ——"

"What then?"

"I am very anxious for something else,"

"Mention it, my child; depend upon my giving it to you."

"Oh! mamma, you will refuse me."

"Is it money for the poor?"

"Papa gave me some this morning, it is already distributed ; what I want is ——"

"Tell me, my dearest child, you know how I love you ; rest assured, then, that I wish to begin the year by doing whatever may be most agreeable to you ; what is your wish ?"

"My dear mamma, I want you to permit me to walk in *the heap of mud* in that avenue, this will amuse me more than anything else."

It will readily be supposed that the Queen did not indulge her son in this extraordinary fancy, and the refusal was a source of bitter disappointment to the young Prince, who was constantly lamenting in the course of the day that New Year's Day was very dull, that he was at a loss how to occupy his time, and he could not be happy so long as he was not allowed to run about in the rain like other little boys. A frost came very seasonably to harden *the heap of mud* and dry the Prince's tears.

This child shewed every indication of a determined character as well as a decided predilection for a military life. He was very intelligent, and evinced great aptitude at learning whatever required mental exertion ; no wonder should be felt, therefore, at the partiality shewn to him by Napoleon, who delighted in the idea of the child's succeeding him at some future day.

He was suddenly seized with a violent complaint : the greatest attentions were paid to him by M. Latour, first physician to King Louis, but they were unavailing. In a few hours the Prince was torn from the affectionate endearments of his mother, who did not leave him for a moment ; it was found necessary to force her away from

the apartment of mourning, where her sorrow had reached its height. In her attempt to remain, she passed her arms through the arm-chair on which she was seated, and offered so much resistance that it became impossible to raise her from it ; and at last she was carried away in the chair to her own apartment ; she fell into a state of insensibility ; her vacant eyes, from which the tears refused to flow, and her difficulty in breathing, gave the greatest uneasiness as to the consequences of her inconsolable grief ; she was incessantly reminded of the loss she had suffered with the view of creating a flow of tears, which would have afforded her the best relief. All was in vain ; she remained in the same state, and fears were entertained of her soon following to the tomb the child she so tenderly loved ! After every means had been adopted for relieving her, it occurred to a chamberlain, whose name has escaped my recollection, to bring in the Prince's corpse and lay it across the knees of its afflicted mother who, restored by this harrowing sight to the sense of her maternal sorrow, uttered a piercing shriek ; her arms, hitherto stiffened by a nervous contraction, resumed their former suppleness to press those dear remains, and an abundance of burning tears fell upon the cold and pale cheeks of young Napoleon, which, a few hours back, were in the full bloom and freshness of youth.

The Queen was out of danger from the moment that nature had opened the source of those tears which were thenceforward to flow so copiously ; exhausted, however, by her recent powerful emotion, she fainted : advantage was taken of this circumstance to carry off the remains of her child, who was for ever torn from her affections.

Corvisart had been written to as soon as the young prince was taken ill; the answer of that celebrated physician arrived too late! the remedies prescribed should have been immediately resorted to; the complaint of the croup, which was hitherto unknown, requires to be treated in time; for if a moment is lost there remains no chance of subduing it.

Corvisart is the first man who has enquired into the origin of this complaint, which commits ravages upon children with frightful rapidity; and his claim on this ground to the gratitude of every family would be sufficient to cover his memory with honour, if he had not reaped an ample harvest of glory which has immortalised his name.

No less benevolent than well informed, he never refused his advice to the unfortunate patients who came to him for relief, and he often paid the price of the remedies which he recommended to them; the poor loaded him with blessings, and his numerous friends can attest that he combined with a solid knowledge of his art the virtues that adorn it and the qualities which embellish society.

His merit was duly appreciated by Napoleon, who entertained the sincerest regard for him: he obtained a multitude of favours for those who incessantly applied to him, very often without any previous acquaintance. In short, he was generally regretted.

M. Horeau was the favourite pupil of Corvisart, who seems to have bequeathed his talent to him. I have already had occasion to allude to him, and he will again come under my notice in these Memoirs.

M. and Madame de Semonville often paid visits to Malmaison. The lady's reputation for wit, the brilliant

employments held by her husband, were motives that induced me to watch their conduct with particular attention, and I felt convinced of the truth of what was reported of them.

They had at all times been in the enjoyment of Court favour; and ever since the period to which I am alluding, they have afforded abundant proof of the facility with which places may be obtained under every form of government, when the suitors for them are possessed of wit, of fortune, and especially of a suppleness which enables them to change their opinions as soon as this prudential course is recommended by occurring events.

Madame de Semonville was a little brunette who did not appear to me to have ever had any claims to beauty, but her graceful figure, her handsome though somewhat bold eyes, a physiognomy as varying as her thoughts, rendered her a very piquant woman. She had a loud voice and spoke well, always using the most correct and felicitous expressions which enabled her to say much in a short space of time. The following anecdote led me into the secret of the means she resorted to when she had any object to accomplish.

I have already mentioned that I had a very handsome *charivari*, for which I was chiefly indebted to the kindness of the viceroy and his mother; as the chain was not sufficiently strong, I generally concealed it within my dress to avoid losing any of the *brevoloques*. Madame de Semonville requested I would allow her to see it; and after having greatly admired it, and extolled the well-known good taste of her majesty, she observed that it was a pity I should conceal such handsome jewels from sight.

"I am compelled to do so, madam, as my chain is too thin."

"Well, then, you should procure another."

"I should ask no better, but am not rich enough."

"You should manage to have a present made to you of one."

"I never could ask for anything, madam."

"I can well understand you; a young lady is timid. It is possible, however, to obtain without asking—by merely throwing out a hint. For instance, the viceroy, who is constantly making presents, would not hesitate to offer you such an one as you wish, if he thought it would not only be acceptable but useful to you. You should suggest the idea to him. Were I in your place, mademoiselle, I should wear the *charivari* suspended to a broad black riband. The Prince would ask your motive for so doing: you would disclose it quite naturally, and rely upon it that you would have the chain the next day. It is not by keeping aloof with a shyness and reserve at which other people only laugh, who forward their views at your expense, that you can succeed in the world, and still less at Court."

I could not take upon myself to resort to the means recommended by Madame de Semonville, and I remained without a chain. Although it related to a very trivial subject, nevertheless it seemed to me to afford so correct a description of the lady who tendered me the advice that it never was erased from my memory. M. de Semonville, a short, corpulent and lively man, endeavoured to conceal under the semblance of good nature an excessive cunning, and that spirit of intrigue for which, I believe, he stands

unrivalled. His penetrating eye never failed to stare women out of countenance, and would as readily lay open to view the inward sentiments of placemen, with whom he always stood on terms of the closest intimacy. Those who have any intercourse with M. de Semonville assert that he displays a certain *candour in his duplicity* which has a truly singular effect. He never disguises his anxiety to run to the assistance of anyone who stands not in need of his help; he acknowledges with perfect simplicity that he courts favours, and never hesitates at giving the method he always resorts to with a view to maintain a firm footing, persuaded as he is that few people would have the wit and talent to find suitable employments for him.

I have been assured that the Duke de Richelieu was for a moment under the impression that Louis XVIII. would accept the resignation which he had tendered on the preceding day. At seven o'clock in the morning M. de Semonville came to see him, and rushed into his arms with the appearance of being deeply affected.

"I have, of course, been retained, M. le Marquis? Since I am honoured with your visit, I may venture to hope that his majesty has condescended to yield to my request, so as to place it in my power to retain the seals of office without sacrificing my honour. Your presence is a proof to me that I may yet be permitted to serve my King and country, both equally dear to my heart."

"It is as you suppose, M. le Duc; the King spoke of it last night in a very open manner."

"I was quite certain of it," said M. de Richelieu,

smiling; "the sight of you is always a good omen."

I cannot vouch for the truth of this anecdote, though I readily believe it, as it accords with everything I have heard of the Marquis de Semonville. The qualities of a courtier, which he possesses in the highest degree, are nevertheless combined in him with many others, of which every man would be justly proud. He is the best of husbands, has adopted the children of his wife (formerly Madame de Montholon), reared them with the greatest care, seen them settled in life, and acted towards them with all the tenderness of a father.

The eldest is to succeed to his title of peer of France; the other, as is well known, followed the Emperor to St. Helena. One is at a loss to explain such devoted attachment, which is the more extraordinary, as Napoleon, irritated beyond measure at M. de Montholon's marriage with a twice-divorced woman, had strictly forbidden her being presented at Court, and gave so harsh a reception to M. de Montholon that the latter quitted France and repaired, I believe, to Westphalia. The misfortunes of his sovereign brought M. de Montholon back to him. As soon as the sentence of exile was passed upon the conqueror of so many nations, M. de Montholon thought of nothing but the glory of sharing it. He took his departure, and became the friend of the man who had given him such bitter cause of complaint.

Madame de Semonville had likewise two daughters; the one was the second wife of Marshal Macdonald; she had formerly been married to General Joubert. I recollect having met her; her charming countenance could not easily be forgotten, and it perfectly coincided with

her unblemished character. The second daughter was Countess de Sparre.<sup>1</sup> They both died very young.

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1 Count de Sparre was a peer of France, a lieutenant-general, and a gentleman of the King's bed-chamber; he was decorated with the grand crosses of various orders. He afterwards married Mdle. Naldi, whose talents and graceful figure we all have had an opportunity of admiring at the Italian Opera. She has not been presented at Court.

## CHAPTER XLVII

THE EMPRESS RELATES HOW READILY THE EMPEROR FELL  
IN WITH THE HABITS OF SUPREME RANK—THE ABBÉ  
DE S \* \* \*—THE ABBÉ D'ESPAGNAC — THE DUCHESS  
DOWAGER DE DURAS—BOOK OF COURT CEREMONIES,  
PRINTED FROM TRADITION—THE QUEEN OF SPAIN, WIFE  
OF JOSEPH BONAPARTE—MORFONTAINE, AS IT WAS AND  
AS IT IS—REFLECTIONS ON ERMENONVILLE—COLONEL  
CLARI

THE Empress frequently dwelt on the admirable flexibility of the Emperor's mind, which accommodated itself with facility to all the different circumstances in which he happened to be placed. He shone with equal lustre in the camp and in the most difficult situations of his varied life, and his talent seemed to develop itself the more vigorously in proportion as his duties augmented.

"The Emperor's character," said she, "is perfectly unique. In the camp and in the council he is alike extraordinary, but in the circle of the palace he is still more remarkable. I confess that, notwithstanding all my intercourse with the world and my knowledge of its customs, the Imperial etiquette at first embarrassed me considerably. The Emperor, on the contrary, fell in with it quite naturally; it was a mere matter of amusement to him, and certainly nobody about the Court understood it better.

“Lannes, in his honest, frank way, used to ridicule what he termed ‘the hypocrisy of political worship.’ But the Emperor, who estimated everything justly, considered Court ceremonies in a higher point of view, and he was of opinion that in the eyes of the people they gave to the sovereign authority the dignity and ascendancy of which many years of anarchy had deprived it. He admitted that their chief influence depended upon the personal qualities of the sovereign, but he said that pomp and etiquette, without being equivalent to their qualities, nevertheless made some amends for the want of them. In maintaining such a theory the Emperor was wholly disinterested, for nobody stands less than he in need of those illusions which impose upon mankind, over whom he seems born to rule. In support of his opinions he quoted the example of many sovereigns who have reigned, as it were, sitting or lying, rather than standing; but whose couches, guarded by the barriers of etiquette, were respected and held sacred. Whether these views were true or false I will not pretend to decide. I submitted to them, though I did not entirely approve of them. There was one man who, without taking the Emperor’s enlarged view on the subject, practised the most rigid punctilio and precision in the observance of Court etiquette; this was the Abbé de S——, who seemed formed to be a master of the ceremonies. His little prim figure looked as though he had just stepped out of a bandbox. In walking he seemed almost to measure his steps, he even used his handkerchief according to some fixed rule, and spoke in the most sententious style imaginable. But the chapel was the place to see him to advantage; there he was triumphant. It was most amusing to behold

him with his great book<sup>1</sup> in his hand, ordering the movements of the attentive crowd.

“At first all was a chaos, in which the different elements were mingled together; but, on the signal of the master of the ceremonies, all these elements became divided and arranged, and order arose out of disorder. The author of these fine manœuvres congratulated himself alike on the genius which inspired them and the docility they produced; he looked upon it as the very perfection of command. The Emperor used to flatter his vanity by telling him that he had observed in his evolutions things which he might turn to useful account at the proper time.<sup>2</sup> In his moments of good humour, Napoleon liked to flatter the vanity of his servants, however ridiculous and extravagant it might be. He used to say that it was the best way of winning their attachment, and rendering them attentive to their duties.”

The Empress used often to smile at the recollection of the blunders committed by several ladies who had not been accustomed to Court ceremonies. Napoleon wished that his Court should be distinguished for all the dignity and elegance which had been lost since the reigns of Louis XV. and Louis XVI.; and he was

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1 A sort of clapper in the form of a book, which the master of the ceremonies uses for his signals.

2 In my childhood I knew at Brussels a man who would have formed a good pendant to the person described by Josephine; this was the Abbé d’Espagnac. He was methodical in everything. He curled his hair before he stepped into the post-chaise when he set out on his emigration, and he made a vow that he would not take out the black pins which fastened up the curls until the counter-revolution. In the expectation of that event he continued to wear his singular head-dress for many years.

anxious to seek out someone who could furnish him with correct traditions respecting old customs. Madame de Montesson had already pointed out several, and the Duchess Dowager de Duras, who was always considered a model of talent and grace, was consulted on several occasions by persons attached to the new Court, which she herself did not attend. Her information was carefully collected, and was, along with some other matter of the same kind, printed in a volume entitled, I believe, *Les Etiquettes de la Cour de Napoléon*. Of the title of this work, however, I am not quite sure, but I have read it, and it appears to be a complete record of ceremonies. Many, no doubt, learnt it by heart, for in the course of a few months all the puerile forms attached to the different offices of the Crown were scrupulously and regularly observed. To acquire a thorough acquaintance with the Court ceremonies was essentially requisite for those who attended the Tuileries, for I knew several women, distinguished for talent and education, who daily devoted several hours to the dull and monotonous perusal of the book above alluded to. Many of the ladies presented at the Tuileries were exceedingly awkward and ungraceful, and seemed to be much embarrassed by their long Court trains; however, the *Livre des Etiquettes* enabled them to take the requisite number of steps and to move their arms and heads with the precision of a recruit at his exercise. This was, at least, some consolation.

The Queen of Spain (wife of Joseph Bonaparte) is described by all her contemporaries as what she really was—an angel of goodness. There was no duty which she did not zealously fulfil. She was devotedly attached to a husband who frequently distressed her by infidelities,

many of which were wholly unworthy of his rank and character. She never reproached him, and took her revenge only by giving him proofs of her assiduous attention and boundless affection. She was an exemplary mother, and herself superintended the education of her daughters, a task for which certainly no one could be better qualified ; for with an excellent understanding she possessed varied and extensive information. That she might pursue her pleasing duties undisturbed she resided at Morfontaine during a great part of the year surrounded by a few chosen friends. She frequently took the infantas to visit the poor, for the purpose, as she said, of accustoming them to see and to relieve distress. The more people practise benevolence, the greater is their own happiness. What gratification can be compared to that of rescuing from despair a mother of a starving family, soothing the infirmities of old age, which among the poor are aggravated by privation ; or saving from misery and remorse the young girl ready to fall a victim to the arts of the seducer. Surely none can deny themselves these pleasures who have ever tasted them. It is unjust to censure too severely those who, possessing wealth, are so unfortunate as to know no other pleasures save those which luxury and extravagance afford. Never having known want, they can form no idea of the ineffable pleasure of relieving it. We should rather pity them, and pray that they may once be induced to perform an act of real charity ; they would augment their own happiness by promoting that of their fellow-creatures.

The Queen's health afforded a pretext for the retired life she had adopted, which appeared exceedingly absurd

in the eyes of her sisters-in-law. Alas! what must be the state of feeling which prevails in Courts, when it is necessary to invent an excuse for obeying the noblest impulses of the heart! At those times when the Queen of Spain was obliged to take up her residence in Paris, the Luxembourg was the resort of women distinguished for talent and virtue, celebrated artists, and literary men. Etiquette was banished, but the respect which the character of her majesty inspired naturally took place of that which she might have commanded merely on the score of rank. All about her forgot that veneration was due to anything but her own perfection.

I saw Morfontaine when the Queen resided there. Nothing could be more beautiful than it was at that time. The revenue, which as I was informed amounted to 200,000 francs, was entirely laid out on the domain. Immense numbers of labourers were employed in keeping up the park and the superb waters, on which nothing like the trace of a weed was to be seen. The walks were regularly swept, and in short the work that was performed every day appeared like preparations for the Queen's arrival after a long absence.

Strangers were permitted to view the house and grounds over which they were conducted by guides who pointed out everything worthy of notice. The Queen frequently sent a collation of fruit to people who visited the house in this way; in short, no one left that magnificent abode without being filled with admiration of all they heard of her majesty, and gratified by the prosperous aspect of the village whose inhabitants seemed like citizens in easy circumstance rather than peasantry.

The pleasing recollection I retained of Morfontaine induced me this year to make another visit to it. I must confess that I deeply regretted having seen it on a former occasion, for I could not admire that which can now be regarded only as the beautiful relic of a residence which was once unequalled in France.

The entrance to the grand park is still kept in tolerably good order; but on advancing a little further it is mortifying to find the waters, formerly so pure and transparent, overgrown with moss! The walks are choked up with grass, the branches of the trees, projecting out in every direction, threaten the safety of those who venture to indulge in the pleasure of looking about them, and the once beautiful structures which adorned the grounds are reduced to ruins.

The guides, who now wear the livery of the Prince de Condé, are for the most part exceedingly uncivil. They do not think it worth their while to attend on visitors of the ordinary class, but send as their deputy a little ragged boy who speaks in such a way as scarcely to be understood. They, however, condescend to make their appearance to receive the *douceur* which is given by the company when they take an excursion on the great lake. Three francs is the sum exacted for what they term *keeping the boat*. This imposition cannot surely be known to the Prince, and no doubt, as soon as his attention is called to it, it will be abolished. I can never believe that he would permit his servants to levy a contribution for a trifling expense which ought in reason to be defrayed by the proprietor of the place. It would also be well to point out to his royal highness the impropriety of allowing the waters to become stagnant and

thereby infecting the atmosphere of the surrounding country. The *Archipelago*, as it is termed, which was formerly one of the most agreeable spots in the place, has now become filthy, and the beautiful islands which were planted with odoriferous flowers are now in part concealed by high reeds and are infested by myriads of frogs. The present illustrious owner of Morfontaine will not surely suffer this beautiful portion of his domain to become an unwholesome marsh.

The above observations apply with equal justice to Ermenonville, which is no longer what it was in the time of M. de Girardin. With the exception of the desert, whose chief recommendation is its barrenness and its picturesque situation, all has fallen into decay. France has witnessed the destruction of so many of her valuable relics that amateurs must rejoice when estates, which have become as it were historical monuments, pass into the hands of persons capable of appreciating and preserving them.

I am perfectly aware that a prince cannot personally direct the works that may be necessary; but the individuals whose business it is to look after such matters unfortunately suffer their masters to bear the blame of permitting these celebrated places to decay. Should this negligence continue, we must, a few years hence, renounce many old and interesting recollections. The house in which Rousseau died will probably soon be destroyed, and his tomb concealed by the parasite plants which are so numerous in the Isle of Poplars!

Colonel Clari,<sup>1</sup> the nephew of the Queen of Spain

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<sup>1</sup> Mdle. Clari, the colonel's sister, married M. de Tascher. Colonel Clari has been raised to the rank of Maréchal de Camp by Louis XVIII.

and the intimate friend of M. Henri Tascher, generally accompanied the latter in his visits to Malmaison. A regular set of features, though void of expression, joined to a degree of assurance that was warranted neither by information nor talent, had acquired for Colonel Clari the reputation of a man of gallantry, a circumstance at which he was, I believe, himself somewhat astonished. I was but slightly acquainted with him, and all I know of his character is what I learned from the Empress, who very much disapproved of his remaining in Paris while his regiment was in Spain supporting the interest of King Joseph his uncle. She justly conceived that he had better have been fighting in Spain than lounging on the Boulevard de Gand and in the theatres. Everything connected with the family of Napoleon has acquired a certain degree of historical importance, otherwise this brief memorandum of M. Clari would not, perhaps, have found a place here.

## CHAPTER XLVIII

THE VICEROY'S JOURNEY TO ITALY COUNTERMANDED—  
THE EMPRESS'S LETTER TO HER SON—HER MAJESTY'S  
OPINION OF THE SENATE—ITS SERVILE SUBMISSION TO  
THE SLIGHTEST WISH OF NAPOLEON—THE EMPEROR'S  
TRICK UPON THE SENATORS—NECKLACES PRESENTED  
BY HER MAJESTY—MADAME DARU—WE QUIT MALMAISON  
—PRETENDED REGRET—MADAME DE REMUSAT—  
CALUMNY PROPAGATED AGAINST US

WHENEVER the Empress was obliged to separate from her children, her tears betrayed her feelings in spite of all her endeavours to conceal them. She was therefore overjoyed to hear that the viceroy had received a counter-order from the Emperor, and that his journey to Italy was deferred for at least some months.

"I have for a long time been so favoured by fortune," said Josephine, "that I dread some great calamity. The loss of my children is the worst I can anticipate, and it is precisely that of which I am most apprehensive."

Her maternal affection was warmly returned on the part of her children, particularly the viceroy, whose love for his mother amounted almost to a sort of worship. When separated from her, he wrote to her frequently; and Josephine's letters to him invariably conveyed all the affectionate advice which she conceived might be useful to him. I subjoin one of her letters, which is a model of grace and feeling.

## "TO PRINCE EUGENE.

"As your fortunes rise, I need not, my dear son, entreat you to raise your mind to a level with them. However high the destiny that may await you, the sentiments which I know you to possess are loftier still. Such is the advantage of a man whose conduct is uniformly guided by principle. You are thus worthy to be the son of him to whom you bear so close a resemblance in person and in character. When plunged into the abyss of misfortune, your father's courage was supported by the recollection of the unsullied honour he had preserved under happier circumstances. Virtue at once sheds a lustre over our lives, and gives us strength to meet the approach of death. You, my son, are surrounded by all the illusions of exalted rank, but they can never mislead or corrupt you. In the midst of wealth and honours you will recollect Fontainebleau, where you were a poor destitute orphan, and that recollection will prompt you to extend a succouring hand to the distressed. I am gratified to learn that your young wife shares your sentiments: it is a proof that she also shares all your affections. This is a matter in which I am deeply interested, and as a mother, I rejoice at it. I embrace you both, &c."

The Empress observed that the servile compliance of the Senate with everything that the Emperor desired was the cause of many measures which would never have been proposed by his majesty but for the certainty that he would experience no opposition in passing the most absolute laws.

"Had the senators done their duty," said she, "Napoleon would have been less ambitious of that

glory for which his thirst is insatiable ; his attention would have been more directed to his people, by whom he would have been beloved as he was by his soldiers. The base flattery of the first body in the state has persuaded him, or at least warranted him in supposing, that all his projects are just and calculated to benefit France. Nothing can henceforth check his enterprising spirit, which subdues every obstacle to the furtherance of his darling scheme—the aggrandizement of his empire. But the senators have gained nothing by their servile submission, for Napoleon neither loves nor esteems them. I have frequently known him to laugh at what he called *the trap* he laid for them. It was this:—

“ In 1807 he was informed that the senators possessed the sum of 1,550,000 francs. They came in a body to pay their respects to him, when he sent for the treasurers and enquired what amount there was in the treasury.

“ ‘ Sire, we certainly have funds, but it is impossible to state precisely how much we possess.’

“ ‘ Pooh, nonsense, gentlemen, you are too regular to be ignorant of a matter of such importance ; come, let me know as nearly as you can.’

“ ‘ We again declare to your majesty that it is impossible.’

“ ‘ Well, then, if you are not in the secret I am, and I can tell you what you do not know ; I am certain that you have at your disposal 1,550,000 francs, and I doubt not your readiness to apply that sum in the best way possible.’

“ ‘ Sire, we destine it for an object, above all others, gratifying to the body devoted to your majesty ; we propose to erect a monument to your glory.’

“ ‘ I am touched by these sentiments, and I entertain no doubt of their sincerity,’ said the Emperor, smiling, ‘ but the monument you propose is useless ; my armies can prove and defend my glory, and even augment it. I am much pleased, though not astonished, at the attachment you evince for me ; and I will point out to you a useful mode of laying out the sum you possess. The inhabitants of the Faubourg Saint-Germain wish for the re-establishment of the Salle de l’Odeon. You will gratify the Empress, and consequently me, by restoring that theatre and giving it her name. I see this idea pleases you ; and I will immediately mention the business to her majesty.’

“ The deputation withdrew, and on the following day waited upon me to obtain my consent ; I granted it, you may be assured, very readily. I suggested that the works should be immediately commenced, which was accordingly done. I was thus happy enough to render a service to an estimable portion of the population of Paris, and to procure a useful recreation to the youth of the college.”

The Empress one morning entered the saloon with a number of beautiful necklaces hung over her arm :

“ You see, ladies,” said she, “ I did not know what a stock of ornaments I possessed. This morning Madame d’Arberg persuaded me to take a sort of review of the contents of my cabinets, and on opening my drawer I found all these necklaces, which I beg you will have the goodness to accept. The Pope sent me a number of chaplets which he was to consecrate on his arrival. These having been forgotten, I had them set ; since then they have never been out of the drawer.

Do, pray, take them from their obscurity and wear them."

We each of us received one, more or less costly. They consisted of large beads of valuable stones, such as lapis lazuli, cornelian, sardonyx, and red jasper—mine was of the latter kind, as was also the one which was presented to Madame Daru, one of the most amiable women of her time. The necklace is still in my possession, and I shall bequeath it to my daughter as an object to which I attach inestimable value.

Some days after the Empress had presented me with this necklace she informed my mother, with evident embarrassment and I am sure with unfeigned regret, that she was under the necessity of disposing of our apartments, as two of her ladies wished to come and stay some time with her. She was sorry that Malmaison was not more spacious, but as she was unwilling to deprive herself entirely of our company, which she said had been exceedingly agreeable to her, she would send for us three times a week; she added that she would never cease to feel an interest in my welfare, and that she would prove it by deeds as well as by words.

My mother immediately communicated to me this conversation, which grieved though it did not surprise me. I was not, indeed, sorry to quit a Court with which I became the more dissatisfied on finding that the general kindness which I had at first experienced was sensibly diminished; but to be separated from the Empress was a subject of deep regret to me. I could not doubt the goodness of her heart or the sincerity of her promises. I was well assured that she had only yielded to urgent importunities for our removal, and I knew that every contrivance which envy could invent

would be adopted to banish us from the recollection of her majesty, whose only fault was, perhaps, that of suffering herself to be swayed by those about her. When we first arrived at Navarre, our society had the recommendation of novelty, and we consequently experienced a good reception. It was never suspected that the Empress would become attached to two women who had never lived at Court, and who were, in consequence, supposed to be wholly unworthy of her notice. When, however, it was discovered that her majesty liked us, and honoured us with as much attention as anyone else, our new friends grew cool; they seemed to suspect that we shared an unusual degree of the Empress's favour, and from that moment the plan for our removal was formed and executed in the manner I have above mentioned.

We held no place in the service of her majesty. Consequently, it was natural that we should be sacrificed to those individuals of her household who were offended at seeing us about her person. She for some time repelled the insinuations that were addressed to her, a circumstance for which I shall ever be grateful.

As soon as it was understood that we were to leave Navarre, we experienced renewed proofs of courtly hypocrisy. We heard nothing but expressions of regret for our departure, and protestations of the pleasure which our return would afford. I received this false kindness with the coldness it deserved; what I had observed for the space of five months enabled me to appreciate its value. Among the persons of whom we had cause to complain under these painful circumstances, I must not, however, include the excellent Madame de Remusat, who has subsequently proved

her sincere regard for me by rendering me a most important service.

When the moment arrived for taking leave of her majesty, I could not restrain a torrent of tears. She assured me that I should see her again in a day or two, and that she would never forget her promise of sending a carriage for us three times a week. However, this did not console me; for I was well aware that a thousand reasons would be invented to prevent her carrying her kind intentions into execution, and our circumstances did not enable us frequently to hire a conveyance for the purpose of visiting her whose amiable qualities would have rendered it desirable to seek her society had she been only a private gentlewoman. I say again that I never knew a person possessed of more attractions, and one who was more calculated to inspire attachment.

For some time I believed that the reasons which I have just mentioned were the only ones which rendered us obnoxious to the individuals about her majesty; and I imagined that the worst they would do was to shew Josephine their vexation at the favour we enjoyed, and which they supposed was likely to diminish that which was due to themselves. I never dreamed that they would carry their malignity beyond this; but I subsequently discovered that I had formed too favourable an opinion of them; they would have stopped at nothing to rid themselves of those who had the misfortune to be their rivals.

I learned, only three years ago, that her majesty had frequently declared her intention of keeping me with her until she brought about an advantageous marriage for me; and that she would never think of

sending us away, after having removed my mother from her family and me from my studies.

This determination gave rise to fresh schemes on the part of our enemies, who had recourse to the most odious calumny in order to effect their object. The Empress was informed that her son had conceived an attachment for me, which I had the presumption to return. He practised duets with me, I often accompanied him in his singing; I received presents from him, as did all the other ladies; he placed my mother next to him at table, and therefore, it was affirmed, he must necessarily be in love with me. The Empress at first treated this absurdity with the inattention it deserved; but it was repeated to her over and over again, and at length she began to think that it might one day or other prove true. She therefore determined on sending us away. She mentioned these circumstances to M——, who repeated them to me. He has always been a sincere friend to me, and his honourable character affords no room to doubt the correctness of his statement. In refutation of the vile slander which was directed against me, I here solemnly aver that the viceroy never addressed one word to me which could by any possibility be mistaken for gallantry. He was polite to me as he was to all ladies; but I protest that he never entertained a thought of shewing me a preference over others who were in all respects superior to me. Even supposing he could have entertained so criminal a sentiment, he would, I am sure, have carefully concealed it rather than have endangered the happiness of a young female in whom his mother took an interest. Such an action would be at variance with the whole conduct of his life, which was free from

every reproach of the kind. I was an object of indifference to the viceroy, and female vanity shall never prompt me to pretend to such a conquest. I admired him, as everyone else did; I gave him a few hints respecting his singing; it certainly required no small degree of ill nature and envy to discover anything reprehensible in this.

The Queen of Naples was in Italy. I did not see her at Malmaison, though I had frequently met her some years before at Madame de Montesson's. She was pretty, but less so than her sister Pauline whom, however, she excelled in freshness of complexion. Too great a degree of *embonpoint* spoiled a figure which was said to have been perfectly elegant before her marriage. She was lively and graceful, and her manners were generally much admired at the fêtes which were got up in honour of her. In her own family her temper was said to be unequal and violent; but of that I had no opportunity of judging, for I saw her only when visiting a lady to whom she sought to render herself agreeable. She was, accordingly, all that was amiable when at Romainville.

I do not recollect either the Princess Eliza, or the Kings of Spain and Westphalia. I can therefore say nothing about them except what is known to everyone. I had no opportunity of being in their presence, and the Empress rarely conversed about them. They were, I believe, not very favourably disposed towards Josephine at the time of the divorce. The Empress was sincerely attached to the Queen of Westphalia, whom she regarded as a model of all that was good and noble.

This opinion was subsequently confirmed by the Queen's admirable conduct during the misfortunes of the

family to whom the Princess of Wirtemberg had become allied.

I very much regret never having known the vice-Queen and the Princess Stephanie of Baden, who were distinguished for every virtue and accomplishment.

Madame Mère is another individual I did not see at Malmaison; but I saw a good deal of her in the country at the time of Napoleon's return from Egypt. She then appeared what might be called an unpretending, *good sort* of woman. In her dress she was more than plain; for she brought with her only one cotton gown for a visit of ten days. Madame Leclerc used to rally her on this point, when she would say, in her homely and familiar manner,—

“Hold your tongue, you extravagant gipsy. I must lay something by for your brothers; they are not all settled in the world. Your head runs on nothing but pleasure, but I have something more serious to think about. Bonaparte (for such was the only name by which she designated the Consul) shall not have to say that we eat up everything he has. You would not impose upon his goodness.”

She readily joined any party of pleasure that was proposed, seemed pleased with everything, and cheerfully postponed her dinner-hour whenever we returned late from any amusing excursion, of which she eagerly enquired all the particulars. The true way to please her was to speak of her children. She loved to hear them praised, and her countenance, which was usually cold, became exceedingly animated when speaking of those who were dear to her.

I never saw her after she received the title of Imperial Highness.

## CHAPTER XLIX

OUR VISITS TO MALMAISON—M. DE MONACO SUCCEEDS  
M. PORTALÈS—THE LATTER CONCEIVES AN ATTACH-  
MENT FOR MDLLE. DE CASTELLANE—HE MARRIES HER  
—ABSURD STORY ON THIS SUBJECT—AWKWARD  
ALLUSIONS OF M. DE BARRAL, ARCHBISHOP OF TOURS  
—THE EMPRESS'S PRESENTS TO MDLLE. DE CASTELLANE  
—MDLLE. DE MACKAU MARRIES GENERAL WATHIER DE  
ST. ALPHONSE—M. DE MACKAU MADE REAR-ADMIRAL—  
THE MARCHIONESS DE SOUCY, SUB-GOVERNESS TO THE  
DAUPHINESS

FOR the space of several months the Empress sent for us regularly, as she had promised. We used to set out early and arrive at Malmaison in time for breakfast. The Empress always received us with marked kindness. I now enjoyed my father's society without being entirely banished from the presence of the Empress; I regularly took my lessons on the days on which I remained in Paris; in short, I was perfectly happy, and I began to prefer my present mode of life to that which I had led when I resided constantly at Navarre. I had nothing to wish for; my parents were indulgent, her majesty kind, and all her ladies, satisfied with having effected our removal, resumed that agreeable deportment towards us which was at first so flattering to me, but which was so short in its duration.

About a month had elapsed in this agreeable way, when one day, on my arrival at Malmaison, I learned that an important change had taken place in her majesty's household. M. de Monaco, who had been so severe towards others, found no one to intercede in his behalf ; when, for reasons with which I am not sufficiently acquainted, he received orders to consign his functions to M. Portalès, who from that moment discharged all the duties of first equerry without bearing that title.

Everyone rejoiced at this change, for M. de Monaco, whose manner was haughty, harsh, and unpolished, was not at all liked, while the amiable M. Portalès was beloved by his inferiors and esteemed by his equals. The Empress, with her usual kind-heartedness, expressed her sorrow that the Emperor should have interfered in an affair which was attended by such unpleasant results to one of her old servants. She submitted to his will with regret, and she obtained the concession that his dismissal should not be publicly announced. M. de Monaco, I believe, received orders to join his regiment, but of this I am not certain.

I also learned that the charms of M<sup>lle</sup>. de Castellane had made an impression on the heart of M. Portalès. That gentleman, tired of the unsettled life he had for some time led, at length determined to enjoy his vast fortune by sharing it with a beautiful and accomplished woman. He accordingly asked the Empress's consent to a union which was exceedingly agreeable to the wishes of her majesty. The marriage was shortly to be celebrated, and the Empress was to give the bride a portion of 100,000 francs and her wedding dresses.

This event was quite unexpected, for M. Portalès had long entertained an attachment in another quarter which was supposed still to exist. The marriage was then generally talked of, but not quite so generally approved. Mothers who have marriageable daughters of their own appear to feel themselves personally injured whenever they hear of the happy union of any young lady of their acquaintance. They seem to expect that a preference should always be shewn to the objects of their affection. Whenever they hear that a brilliant match is about to take place, they launch into all sorts of ill-natured attacks upon the character, the family, and the person of the intended bride. The respect naturally inspired by maternal love forces us to pardon that which under any other circumstances would never be excused. Such base and envious feeling would otherwise be intolerable, and we should hate the woman who could be capable of regretting the happiness of her daughter's friend.

A thousand absurd stories were circulated respecting the manner in which the marriage of M. Portalès has been brought about; and great pains were taken to discover reasons for that which was after all exceeding natural, for Mdle. de Castellane was distinguished for beauty and intelligence, and was a particular favourite of the Empress. It was asserted that M. Portalès had been entrapped in the *unlucky affair* by a series of intrigues, while the real truth was that he, like many others, had been captivated by the charms of the fair lady on whom he fixed his choice. Even her majesty's name was mingled up with these stories, the most accredited were as follows:

“M. Portalès, weary of a long connection with a frivolous and coquettish woman, was said to have transferred his affections to Madame Vanberghen, at whose feet he was surprised by her majesty in the very act of making a passionate declaration, which seemed not likely to be rejected. The Empress immediately interrupted him by observing that she was aware of the nature of his ardent appeal, and that she knew M. Portalès was entreating Madame Vanberghen to use her influence in his behalf with her friend, Mdle. de Castellane; that she perfectly approved of his suit, and that the marriage would meet with her entire concurrence.”

This improbable story, which was merely a stupid mutation of the calunmy formerly directed against Madame de Montesson, was circulated in Paris. The idle and ill-natured lost no time in reporting it about, while they themselves affected to disbelieve it.

I know not by whom the romance was invented, but it was equally false and infamous. No woman could conduct herself with more correctness than Madame Vanberghen, and her reputation was unsullied. This, perhaps, sufficiently explains why she was singled out as the object of the attack alluded to. She was, however, avenged by increased regard on the part of the Empress, and by the esteem of all whose good opinion was of any value. All who were acquainted with Mdle. de Castellane well knew that she needed not the recommendation of fortune; and it is impossible to imagine that Josephine was obliged to resort to artifice to effect a scheme which feelings of gratitude and duty would lead M. Portalès

readily to accede to, even though his heart had been at variance with her majesty's wishes.

The Archbishop of Tours (M. de Barral), first almoner to the Empress, pronounced the nuptial benediction in the little chapel of Malmaison. He delivered an address which was characterised by his usual talent. By a singular inadvertency in a man distinguished by infinite tact, he observed that M. Portalès could not but esteem himself supremely happy in obtaining the hand of a young lady of high birth, since his own origin was by no means illustrious; then, addressing Mdlle. de Castellane, he congratulated her on her union with a man who was disinterested enough to set aside all considerations of fortune. He thus offended the families of both bride and bridegroom, and gave great displeasure to the Empress, who did not fail to let him know it.

Her majesty ordered for Mdlle. de Castellane a collection of wedding dresses fit for a princess. She also presented her with several splendid shawls and sets of jewels. In short, the Empress more than fulfilled her promise to the young lady's dying mother, which was to act the part of a parent towards her.

No writer who has touched upon the character of the Empress Josephine has dwelt sufficiently on the inexhaustible liberality and benevolence of that inestimable woman who now seems almost forgotten. In all the memoirs which have appeared since her death, a few words have been deemed sufficient for her panegyric. This injustice to the memory of a princess who made it the chief business of her life to seek out and relieve distress, may, I conceive, be accounted for by the rank and situation of the writers who have attempted to

pourtray her.<sup>1</sup> Statesmen must naturally feel interested in elucidating every important fact connected with the extraordinary events of the last twenty years; political considerations engross their whole attention, and they scarcely think it necessary to notice a woman, whose noblest title in their estimation was having been the

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1 Madame Durand, in her "Memoirs," which I lately perused, states that Maria Louisa expended a great deal more money in charity than the Empress Josephine. Gratitude naturally prompts Madame Durand to laud the merits of a mistress from whom she received boundless favours; but the virtues of another should not on that account be depreciated. Josephine's manners, which were decidedly French, no doubt rendered her more fascinating than her rival in a Court where grace and elegance were duly estimated. But to relieve the distresses of the unfortunate, something more was necessary than fine words and engaging smiles. Now the fact is that charity was the brightest trait in the character of the de-throned Empress. Madame Durand asserts that she gave only 5,000 francs per month to the poor. It is possible that that sum might have been charged on the list of her expenses, but it did not certainly include the money that was profusely distributed on the recommendation of her ladies, or that which was given to the numerous petitioners who appealed to the benevolence of Josephine. At Navarre, where the Empress no longer occupied a throne, the venerable Bishop of Evreux assured me that he annually received from her upwards of a hundred thousand for the use of the poor of that town, a sum greatly exceeding that mentioned by Madame Durand, and which was, no doubt, much more considerable when Josephine was reigning Empress. I never remarked that she was *solely intent on producing effect*, and still less that she was *not beloved by those about her*; for the truth is, that when she was divested of power none of her household wished to leave her. This fact which is highly honourable to those whom it concerns is the best proof of the boundless attachment cherished for her majesty. I say again that gratitude may naturally have led Madame Durand into inaccuracy in drawing a parallel between the two wives of Napoleon; and I trust that the same sentiment on my part will sufficiently apologise for the length to which this note has extended. Madame Durand, whose heart retains so warm a recollection of the benefits conferred on her, will, I am sure, be the first to excuse me.

wife of a hero. The virtues natural to our sex, and the exquisite sensibility which they cannot comprehend, are passed over unobserved, while their eyes are fixed exclusively on the great and sanguinary scenes of our modern history.

I, on the contrary, not feeling an equal interest in such matters, have endeavoured to describe only that which comes within the reach of my understanding. My heart cherishes for the Empress Josephine the degree of attachment requisite in one who undertook to pourtray her character; and having received from her no favours calculated to compromise my sincerity, I feel myself peculiarly qualified to raise a monument to the memory of the many engaging qualities that adorned her. The prevailing taste for memoirs of celebrated individuals will probably secure a considerable circulation for this little work, by which means her majesty's character will become known, and consequently admired. I now rejoice at having undertaken a task, which is for many reasons so gratifying to my feelings.

The Empress was much attached to Mdlle. de Mackau, whom she had in some measure deprived of a sister by removing her from the service of Princess Stephanie of Baden, with whom she was a particular favourite. She was anxious to provide for her as well as the Princess would have done, from whose protection she had withdrawn her. She consequently determined to arrange an advantageous match for Mdlle. de Mackau as she had already done for Mdlle. de Castellane.

General Wathier de St. Alphonse was the person on whom she proposed to confer the hand of a young lady whose only fault was an excessive timidity, which

often paralysed the gifts with which nature had liberally endowed her. The happiness which attended this union proved how correctly the Empress estimated the characters of two persons who, in truth, seemed formed for each other. To a pretty and interesting person Mdlle. de Mackau added virtues and talents far above the ordinary standard. She was an exemplary daughter and sister, and as a wife her conduct is irreproachable.<sup>1</sup>

M. Portalès, with the view of economising the expenses of the Empress's establishment, made some changes and suppressions, in consequence of which some difficulty arose in sending the carriage for our conveyance to Malmaison. By degrees it became less and less frequently, and at length we were entirely deprived of it.

For some time we made great sacrifices to defray the expense of continuing our visits to Malmaison, hoping that the accommodation we had hitherto enjoyed would be again conceded to us. At length, finding that no new arrangement was made, we were forced to relinquish our agreeable journeys altogether. We wrote to acquaint the Empress with our reasons for so doing; but to this letter no answer was returned. This was so utterly at variance with the general conduct of the Empress that I feel persuaded she must have given some orders which were never transmitted to us. I am the more warranted in suspecting this negligence, to call it nothing worse, on the part of some person about

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<sup>1</sup> She is the sister of Rear-Admiral Mackau, whose rapid advancement in the navy might appear extraordinary, but that his noble conduct and brilliant courage sufficiently account for it. The Marchioness de Soucy, who was formerly sub-governess to the dauphiness, was their aunt.

her majesty, as I know that on another occasion her orders were disobeyed when she intended to confer a favour on us.

Perhaps she thought we were not sufficiently grateful for all she had done for us! This reflection has often added bitterness to the many tears I have shed to her memory.

I have now nothing more to say of Malmaison from my own personal observation; but I have carefully collected a number of authentic facts which will be hereafter stated. In the meanwhile, until I arrive at the events of 1814, I will relate some particulars concerning celebrated individuals, especially eminent artists with whom I have been on terms of intimacy. France is justly proud of the prosperity to which she has raised the fine arts, and for that reason the details which I am about to submit to the reader will not, I trust, be deemed uninteresting.

National glory, under whatever point of view it may present itself, is always gratifying to my countrymen. Besides, the best proof I can adduce of my love for the country that gave me birth is to relate all I know of the men who, by talent, acquirements and high character, have added lustre to the French name.

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